THE ART OF

RECORE™

by KBG GUIDES

THE ART OF

RECORE™

THE ART OF

ReCore™

CAPTIONS BY **MIKE SPALDING AND JOSEPH STATEN**

DARK HORSE BOOKS

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THE ART OF RECORE™

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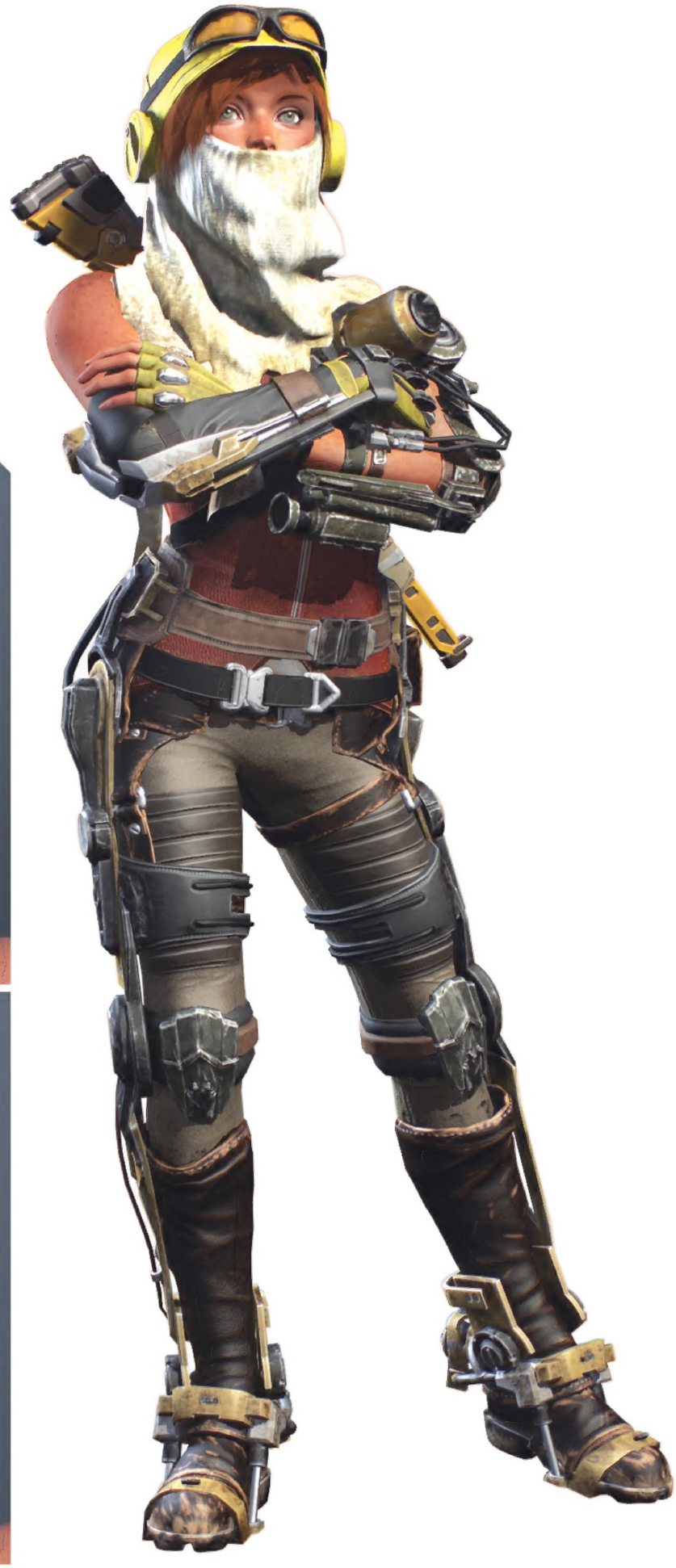
CHAPTER 001

CHARACTERS

Todd Keller, Dan Doherty, and Etienne Jabbour (Models), Steve Hoogendyk (Posing), and Mike Spalding (Render/Lighting)

JOULE

ReCore's heroine, Joule Adams, is a colonist on the distant desert world of Far Eden. Joule's environment is rough and unforgiving, but we didn't want to put her in a bulky armored spacesuit. The team's goal was to create a capable young survivor, and we designed each piece of Joule's equipment with that goal in mind—the thrusters in her boots help her leap across deep chasms; the exoskeletons on her legs and arms give her additional strength and resilience. Above all, we wanted Joule to represent a rugged femininity that would appeal to all gamers with a sense of adventure.



Todd Keller and Psyop Todd Keller and Etienne Jabbour (Model), Steve Hoogendyk (Posing), and Mike Spalding (Render/Lighting)

Shinsuke Komaki

Todd Keller and Etienne Jabbour (Model), Steve Hoogendyk (Posing), and Mike Spalding (Render/Lighting)

Todd Keller and R. C. Torres

In the early stages of Joule's development, the team started with anime-inspired designs reminiscent of the classic *Mega Man* titles. As the work progressed, we explored edgier designs before landing on a look that blended youthfulness with bravery and an adventurous spirit. The one element that remained consistent throughout was Joule's striking green eyes.

Todd Keller and Psyop

Todd Keller and Psyop

Todd Keller and Psyop

Wesley Burt of Massive Black

KAI

Like Joule, Kai Brehn is part of Far Eden's first group of hardy colonists, so his look has to complement hers. As the game developed, we realized we needed a more clear and personal way to tell the story of Earth—how humanity was nearly wiped out by the Dust Devil epidemic. So Kai became one of Dust Devil's victims, losing his leg to the disease at an early age. But Kai is far from handicapped; his robotic leg makes him an even stronger and more capable explorer.

Wesley Burt of Massive Black

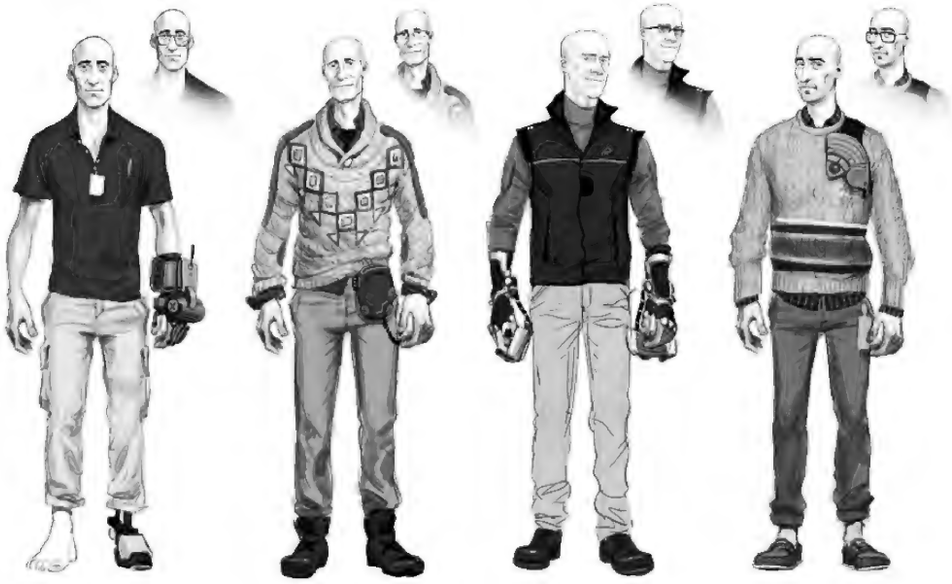
Etienne Jabbour and Loïc Paulus

Damien Papet

Wesley Burt of Massive Black

Wesley Burt of Massive Black

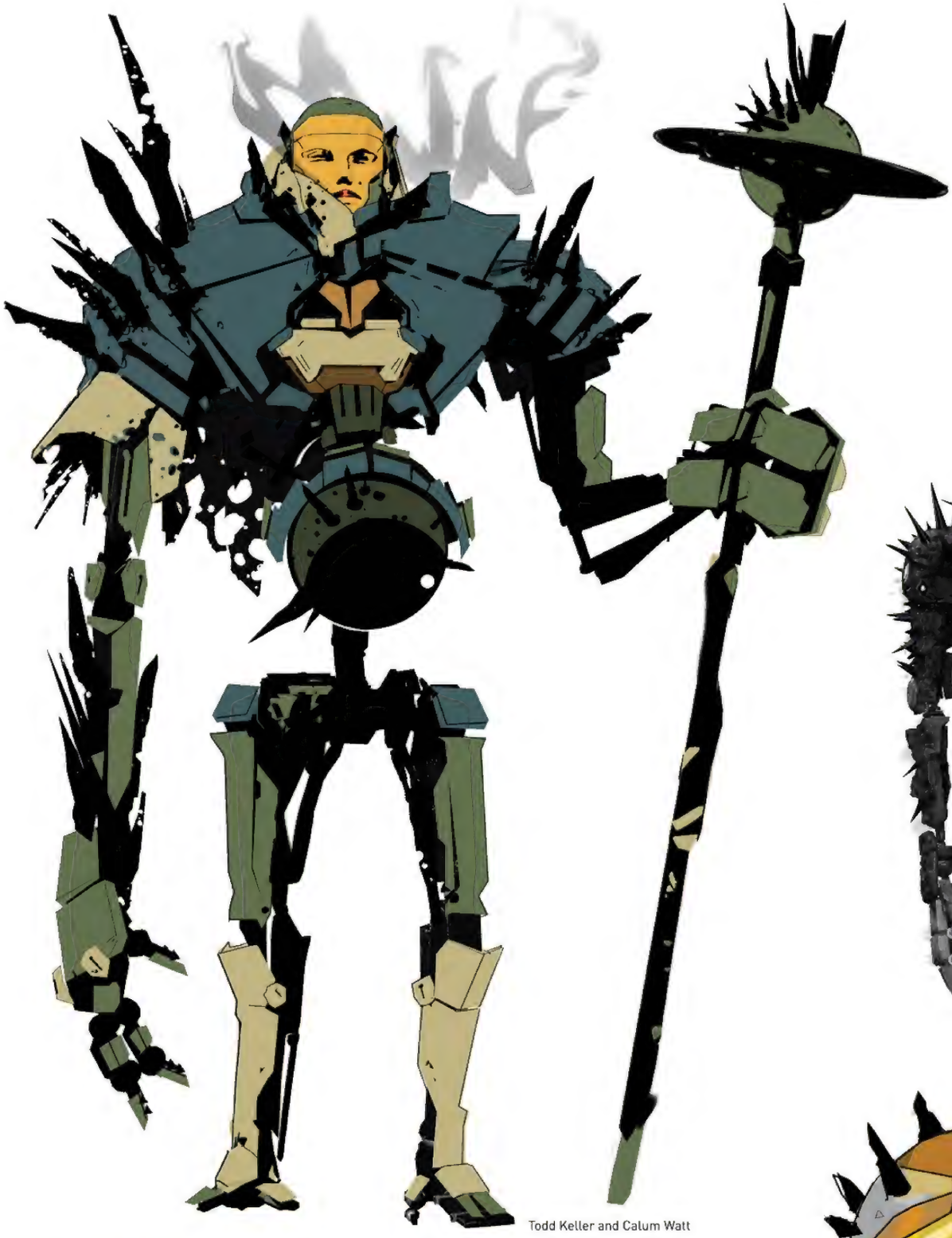
Wesley Burt of Massive Black



Tom Rhodes

DR. ADAMS

Joule's father, Dr. Thomas Adams, is the creator of the Cores—the AI at the heart of every Corebot. Adams is a brilliant scientist but also a loving father. As with Kai, we explored the idea of Adams having a prosthetic limb due to a Dust Devil infection, but the team decided to focus on the scientist theme. Nothing says nerdy-but-lovable dad like a sweater vest. And Adams's disheveled appearance communicates the stress of his job of trying to save Earth from Dust Devil.



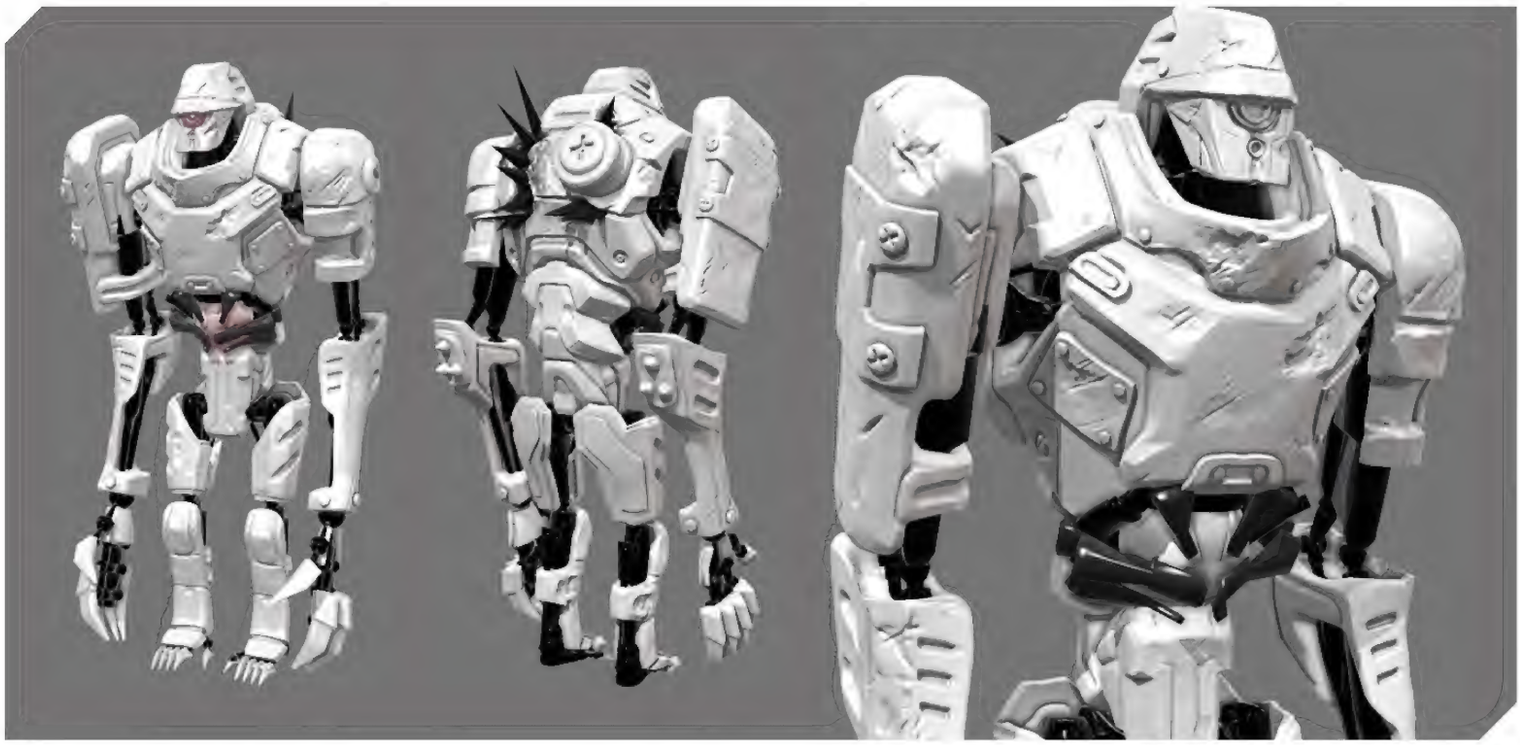
Todd Keller and Calum Watt

Dan Doherty and Mike Spalding

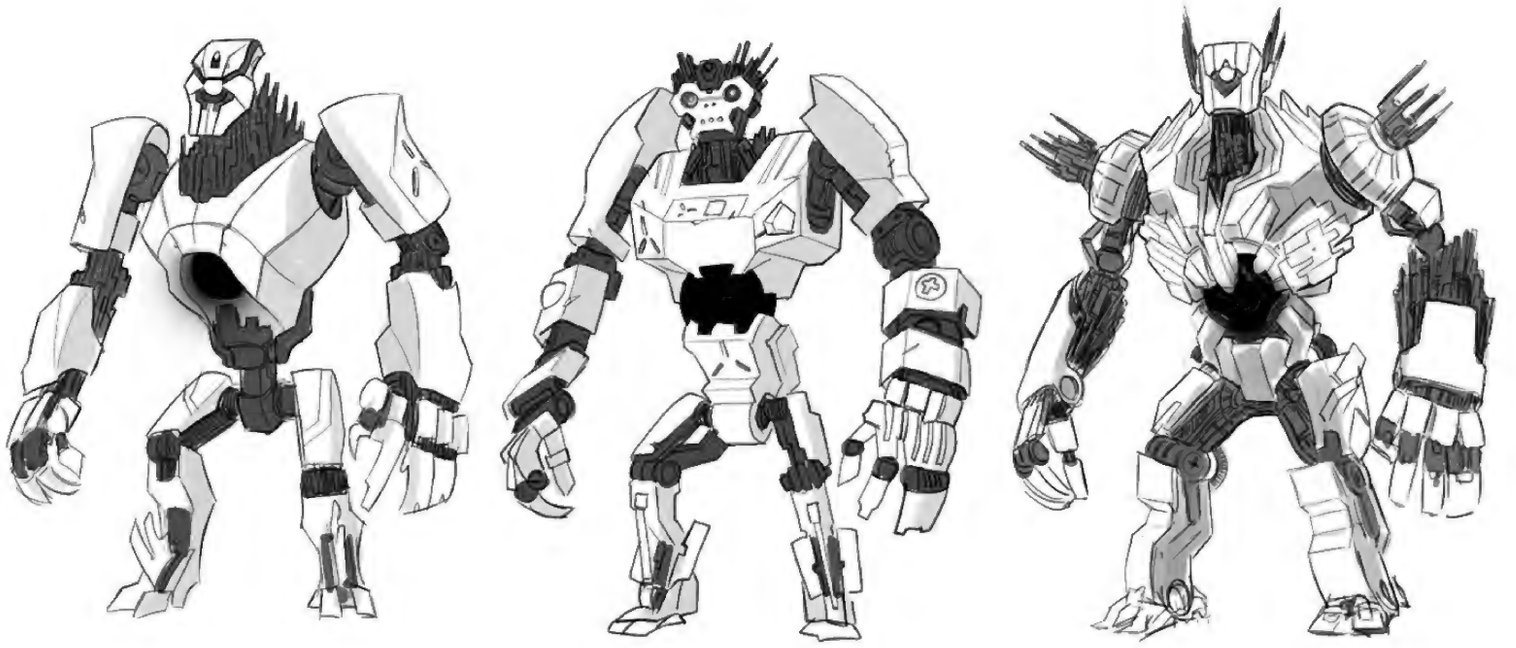
VICTOR

After Joule, *ReCore*'s villain, Victor, took the longest to design. The team started with a broad array of options—from a human-proportioned character to strange, robotic beasts. One early concept had Victor's face covered with a human-like mask, and that element stayed with the character throughout. Victor is the only Corebot with a black Core—a symbol of his corrupting influence on the other Corebots of Far Eden.

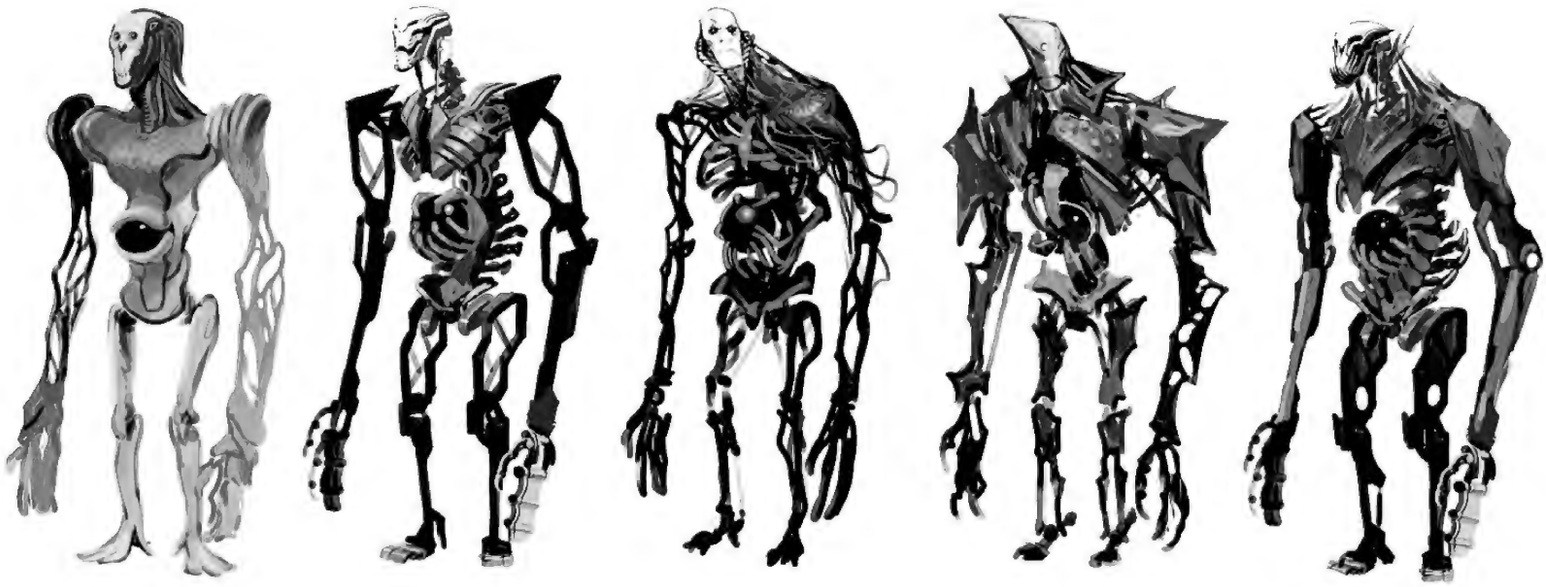
Calum Watt



Dan Doherty and Mike Spalding

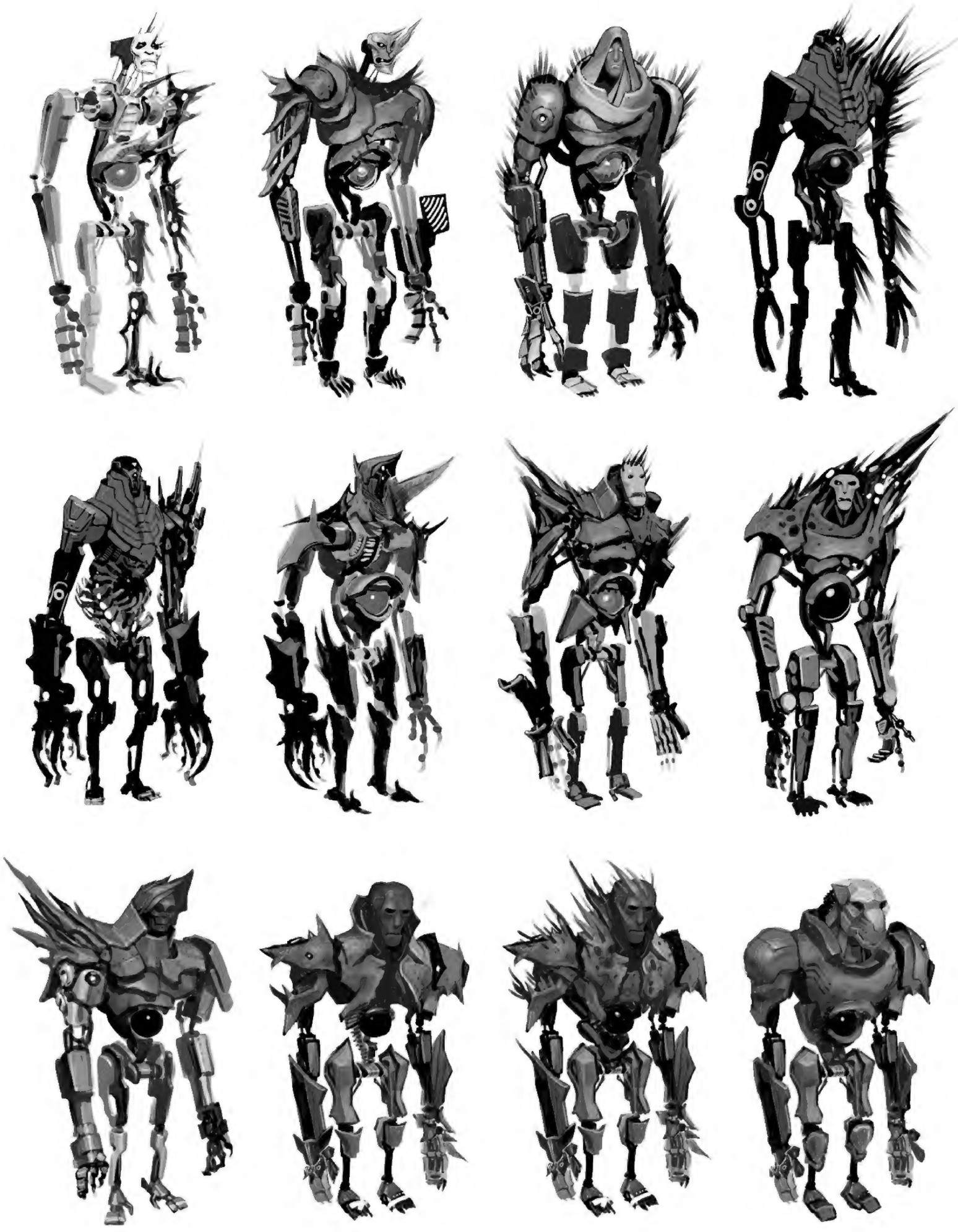


Mike Spalding



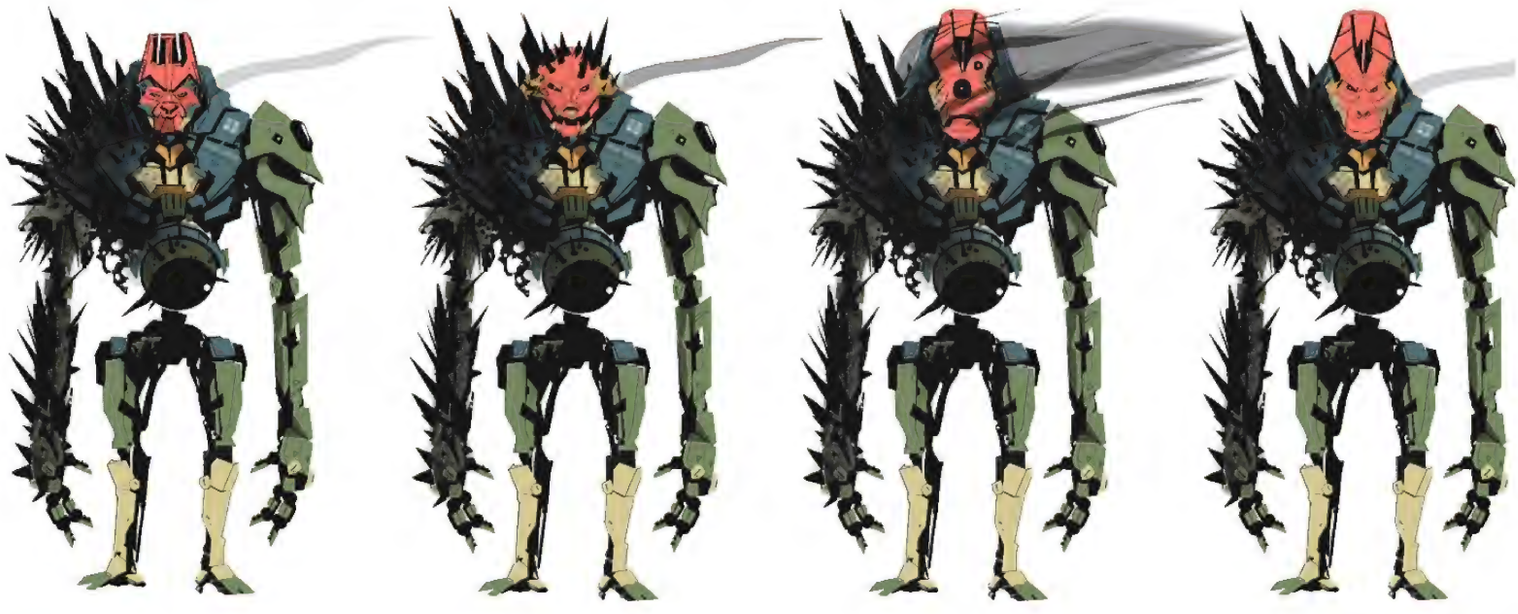
Tom Rhodes

Tom Rhodes

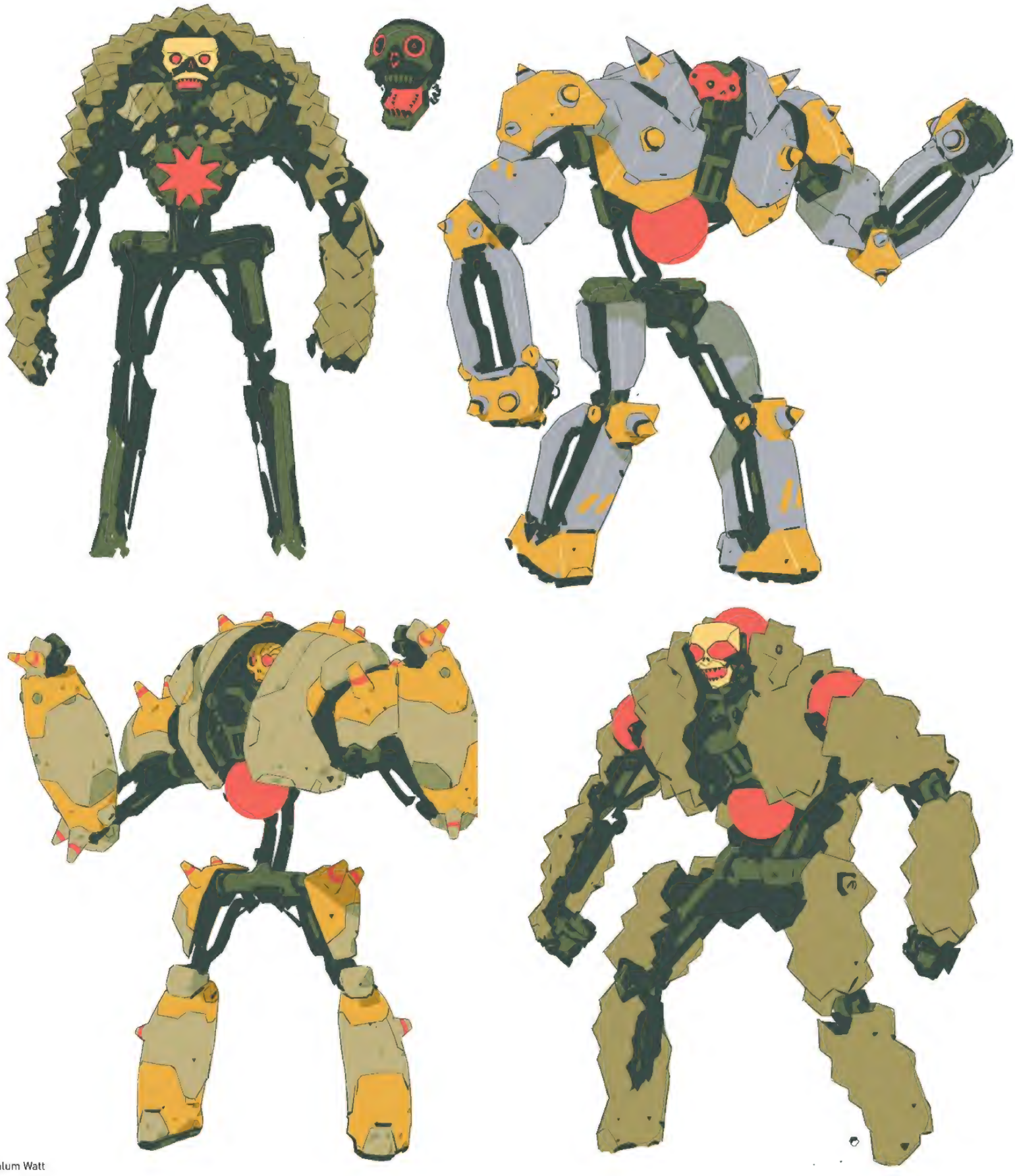


Tom Rhodes

Patrick Shettlesworth

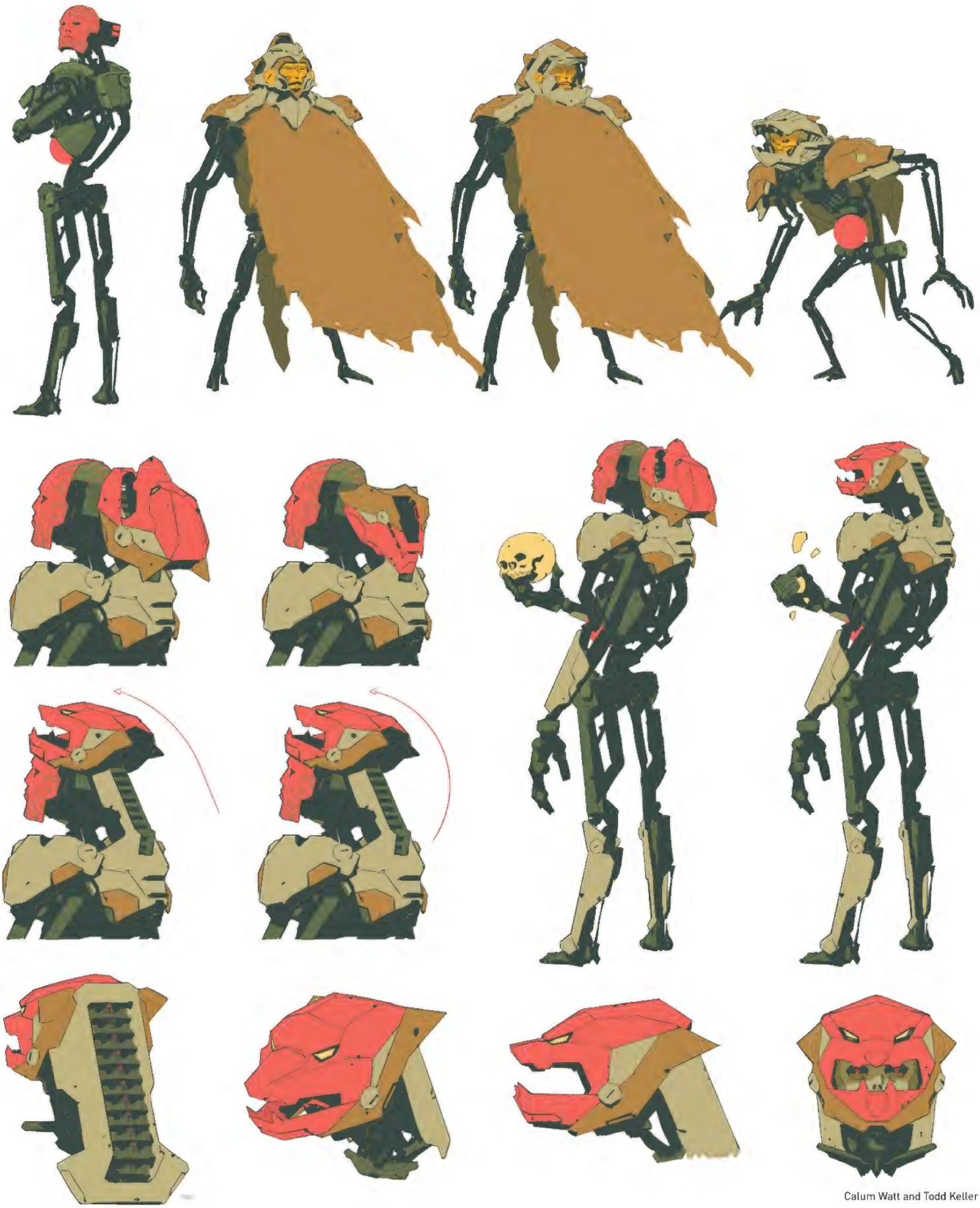


Patrick Shettlesworth



Calum Watt

As the team considered the different attacks and special abilities Victor might use to try to defeat Joule, we created designs that were inspired by heavy industrial machines like drills and other mining equipment. While we liked the bulk and menace of these ideas, they worked against Victor's regal personality, and the high shoulders made it difficult to see his head in cinematic shots.



Calum Watt and Todd Keller

Early on there were plans to give Victor a secondary mode, quite literally a "beast mode," where he would abandon his more reserved, kingly persona and become a savage brute. While Victor does become more animalistic toward the end of the game, we decided his human mask was sufficiently intimidating and iconic, and we left it uncovered.

Calum Watt and Todd Keller

The team also explored draping Victor in human clothing taken from his creator, Dr. Julius Roldán. Other costume ideas included a tattered cape torn from a Far Eden mission flag or the insulating foil of one of the crashed colony ships. But the more agile Victor became in combat, the less constraining his costume had to be. Victor's staff represents the ringed planet Far Eden and his complete mastery over all who live there, both humans and Corebots.

Calum Watt

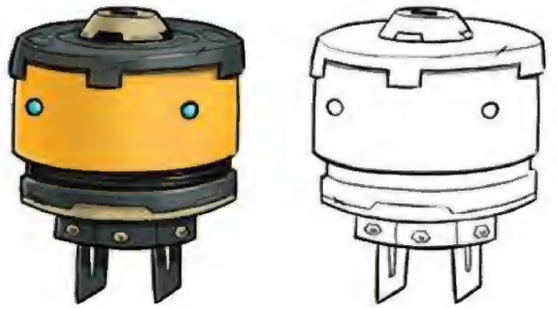
CHAPTER 002

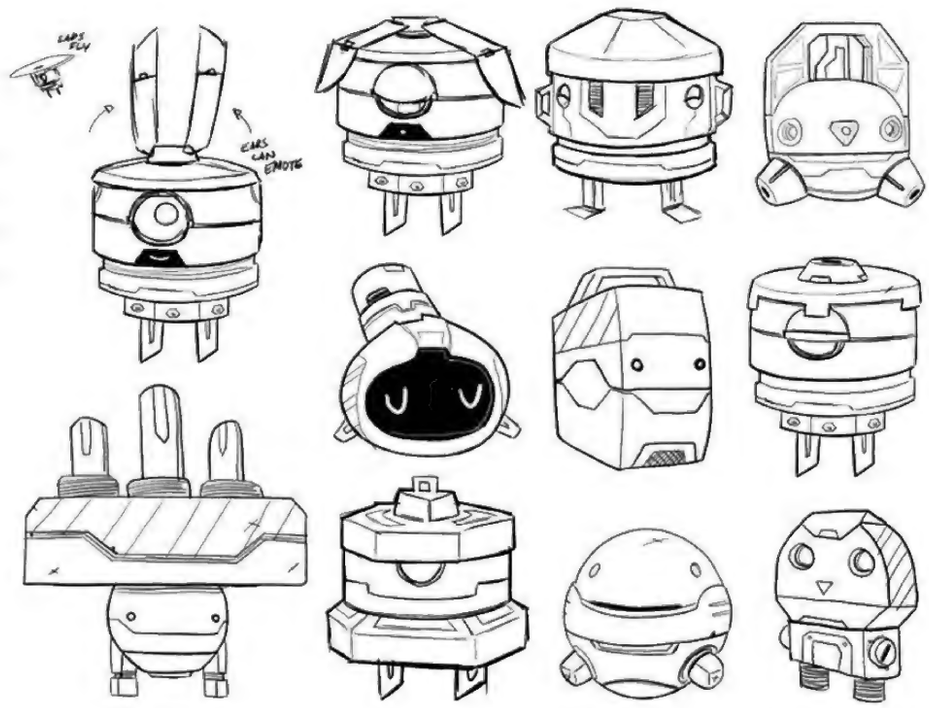
TECHNOLOGY

Dan Doherty (Model), Steve Hoogendyk (Posing), and Mike Spalding (Render/Lighting)

POWER CELLS

In the world of *ReCore*, even the electrical plugs have personality. These Power Cell Corebytes were designed to be charming and a little helpless so that it always felt satisfying to coax them back into the sockets where they belong.





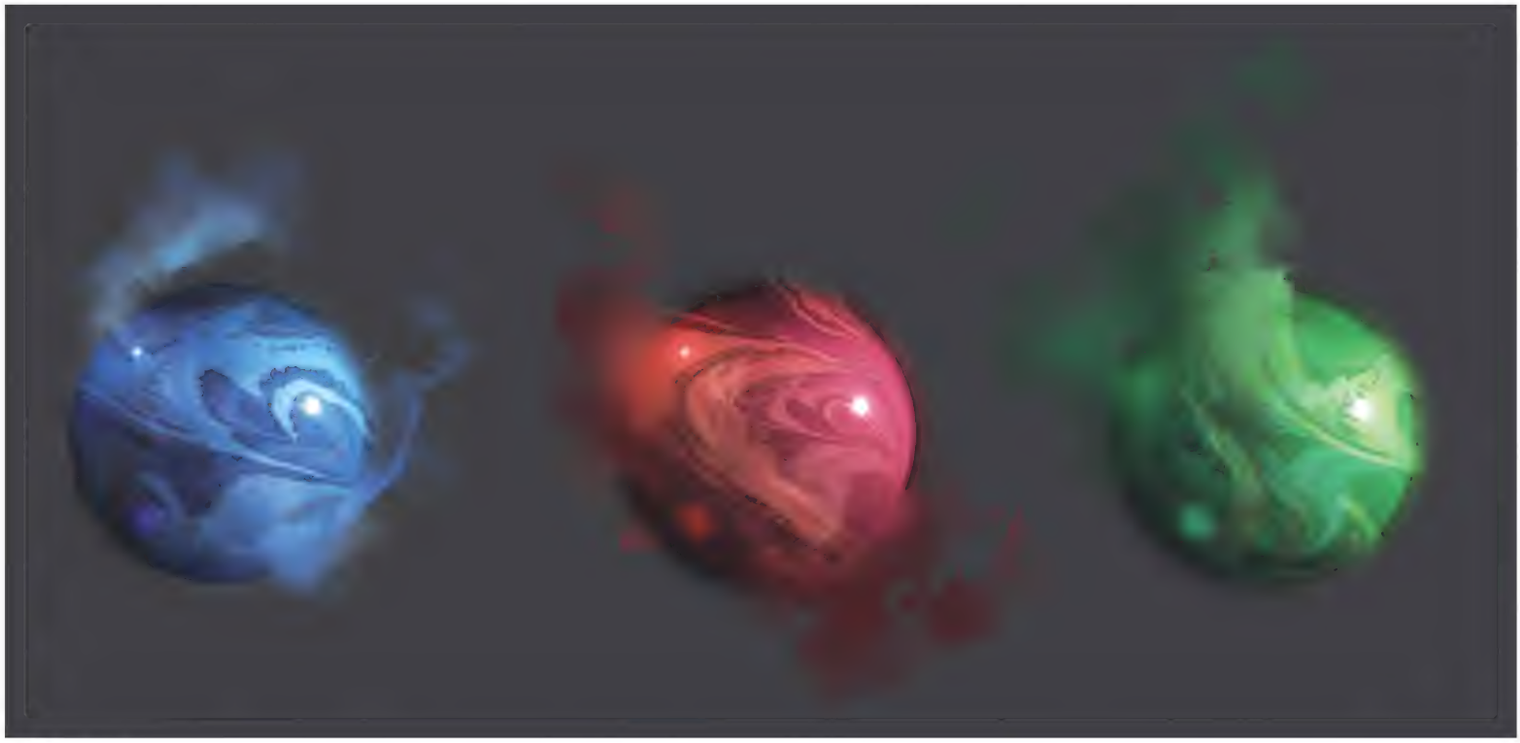
Mike Spalding

Loïc Paulus

CORES

The Cores contain the AI personalities of the Corebots. Their final design stayed pretty close to the initial paintings, but the in-game implementation presented some challenges. In order to get the energy effect to play consistently on the geometry, the team needed to create a small animated texture that would work wherever the camera was positioned. This technique was especially critical for the prismatic or multicolored Cores.

Todd Keller

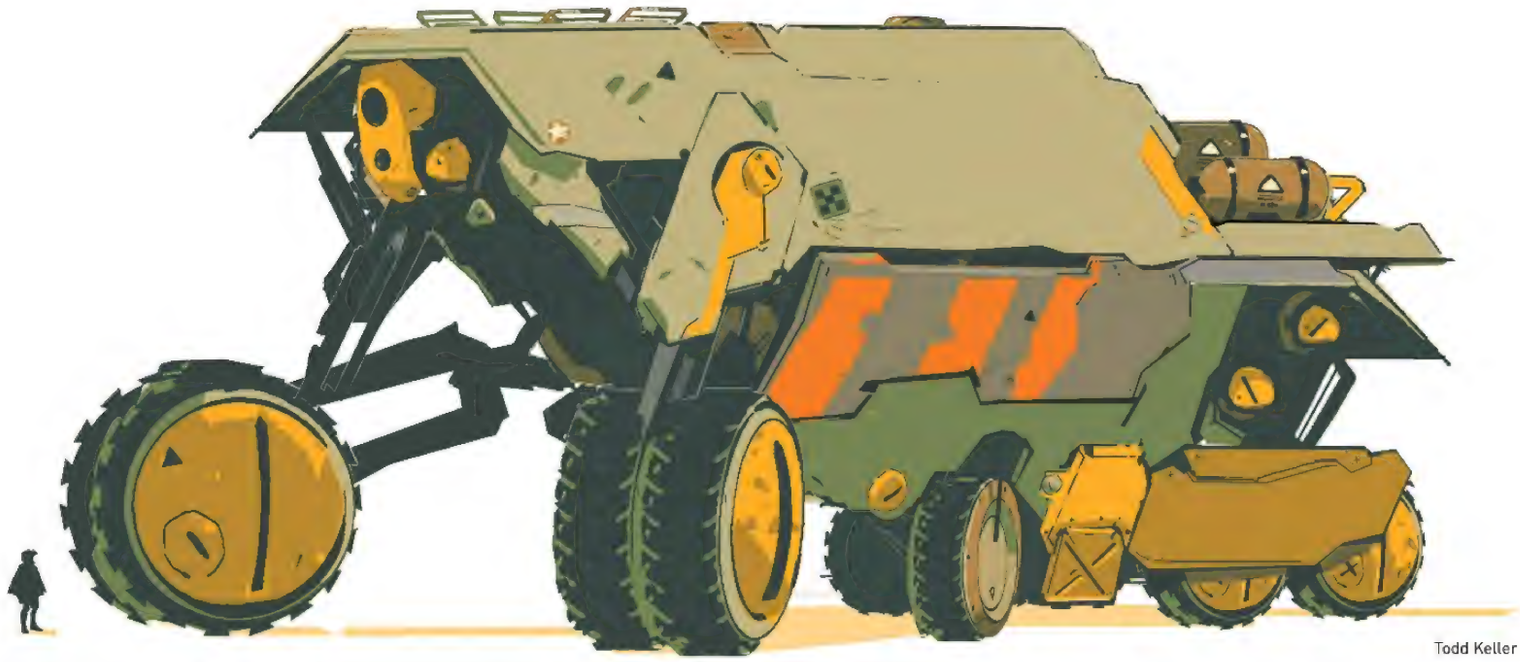


Todd Keller

Dan Doherty (Model), Steve Hoogendyk (Posing), and Mike Spalding (Render/Lighting)

VIOLET

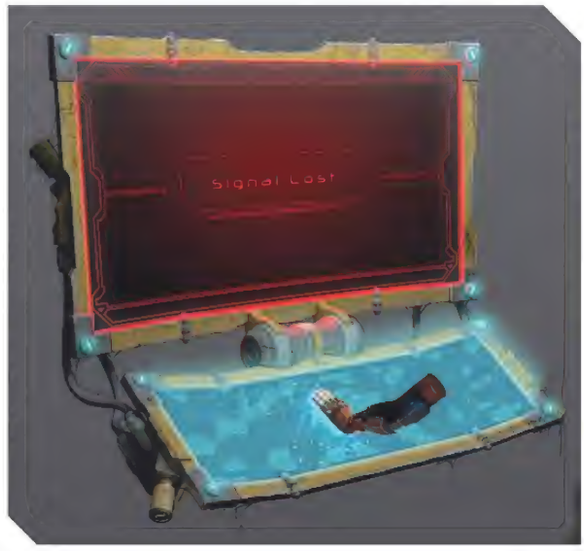
The Corebot Violet may be small in size but she has a larger-than-life personality. As she is a former officer in a revolutionary army that fought Victor long ago, we wanted Violet to look rugged and show some of the wear and tear of combat. But she is also one of Joule's allies, so we wanted Violet to be approachable—hence her big, circular head. Violet's single large eye helped the animators bring her personality to life.



Todd Keller

CRAWLER

The exterior design of the Crawlers was inspired by the massive construction vehicles found at industrial mining and drilling sites. Just as with the Corebot designs, the Crawlers have a limited color palette and a dark metal skeleton. The large bolts are a signature of *ReCore*'s design but needed to be handled carefully, since without the right visual elements surrounding the bolts, the Crawlers would feel too small. Joule's Crawler is her home away from home. We wanted it to feel like a lived-in space that reflected her adventurous spirit and a little of the messiness that she inherited from her father, Dr. Adams.



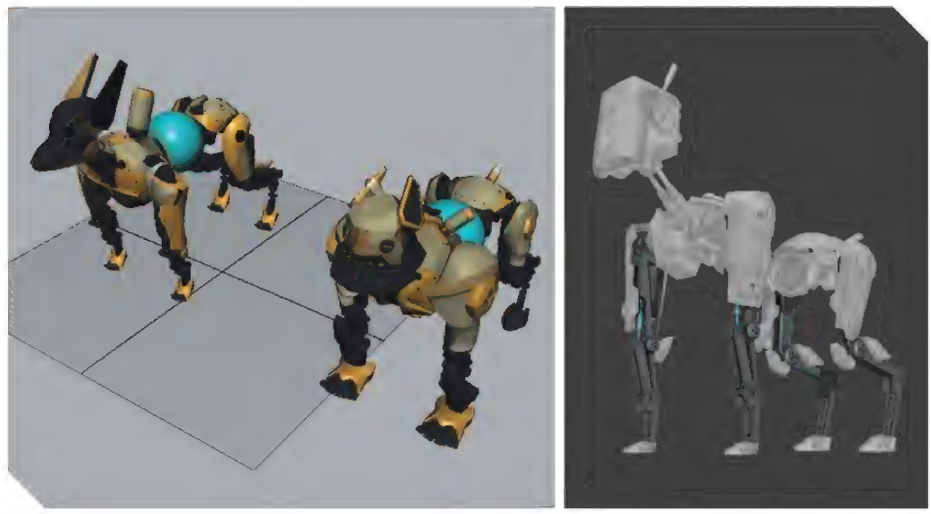
Damien Papet

Damien Papet

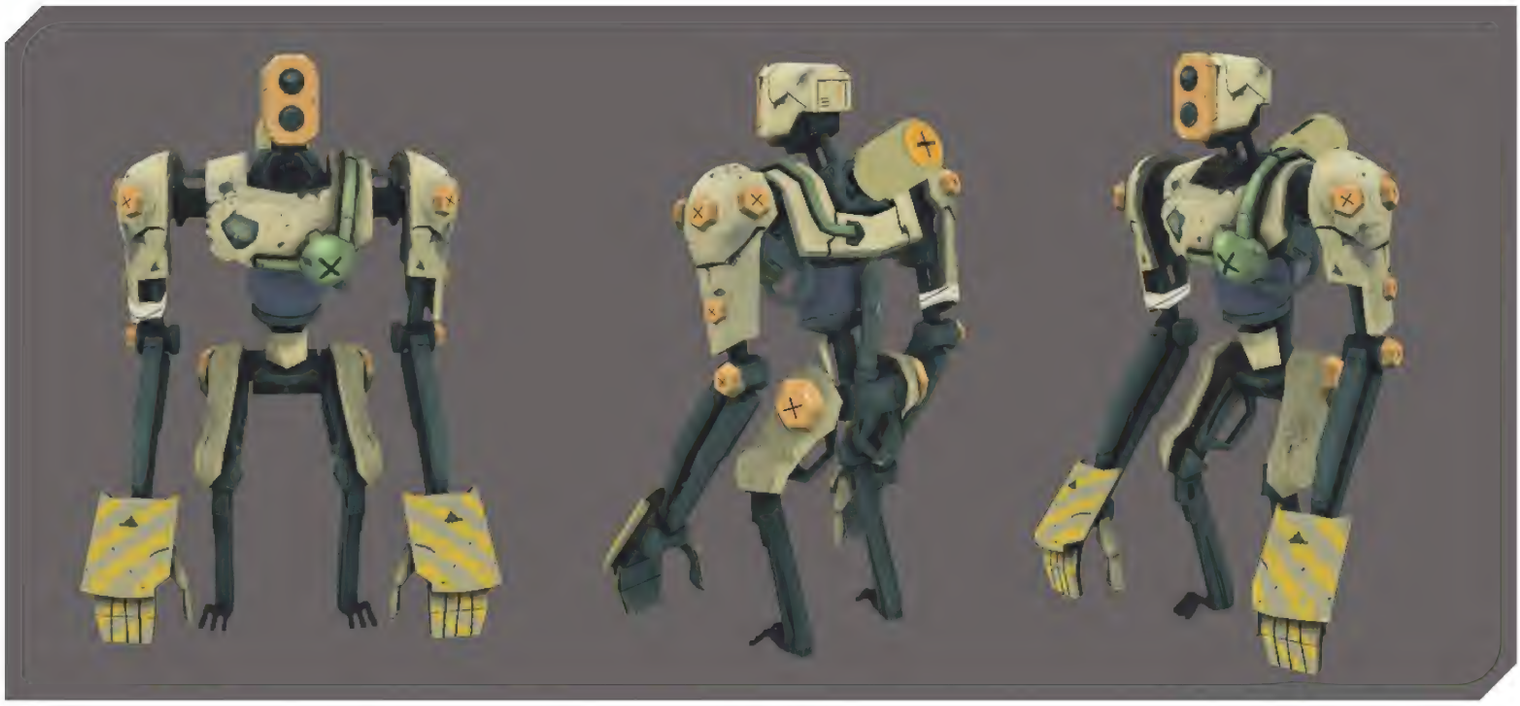
Todd Keller and Dan Doherty (Model), Steve Hoogendyk (Posing), and Mike Spalding (Render/Lighting)

COREBOTS

Corebots are intelligent robots responsible for the construction and maintenance of the Far Eden colony. Each body type, or "frame," has a specific job, like exploration or transport, and is based on an animal that represents this role. For example, the AP-3 frame above is modeled after an ape and designed for heavy construction work that requires both strength and dexterity.



Todd Keller and Dan Doherty



Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

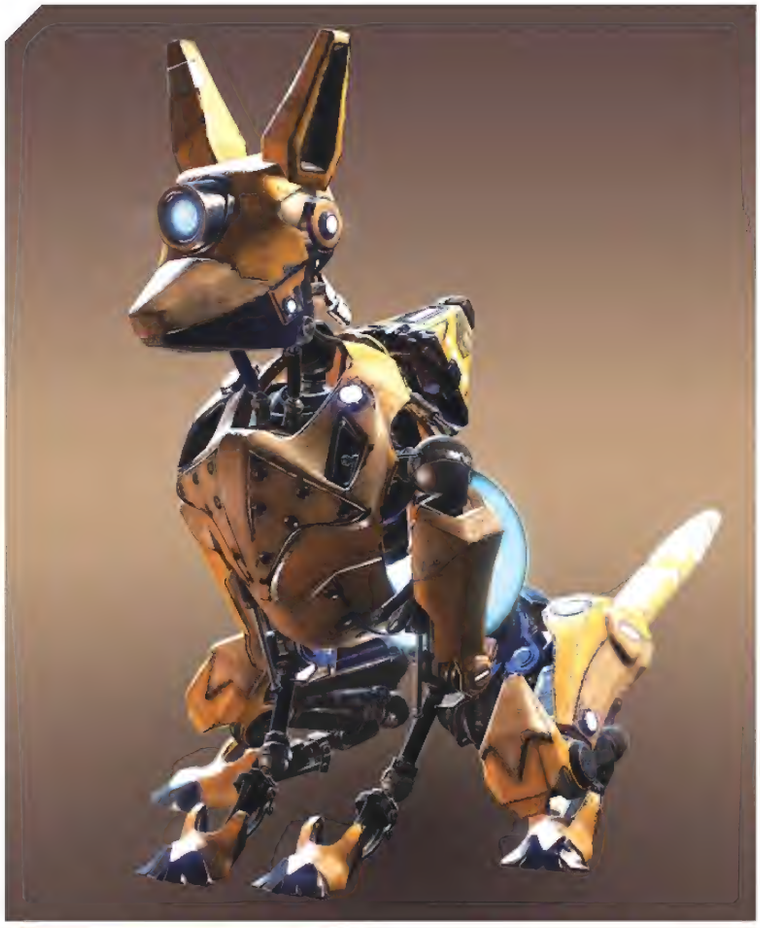
Todd Keller and Dan Doherty (Model), Steve Hoogendyk (Posing), and Mike Spalding (Render/Lighting)

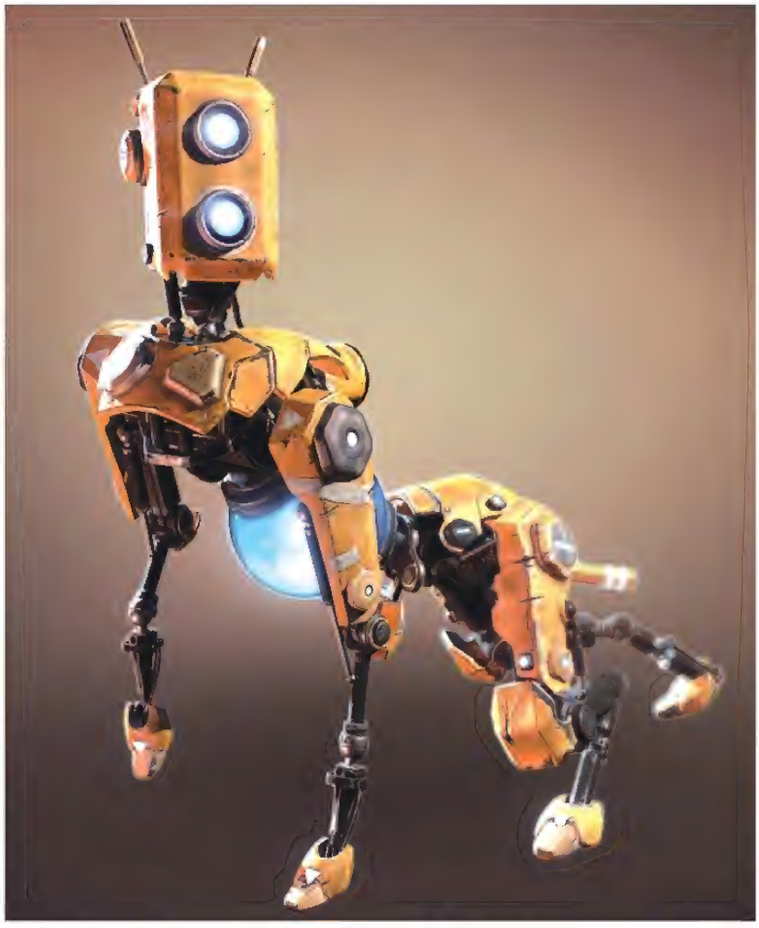
Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

The Corebot frames all have variants—at least three per frame type. Most of these variants were inspired by animals, but some are more whimsical or focused on the kind of work that frame has been assigned on Far Eden. The designs at the bottom of the facing page show frames that have been corrupted by the mysterious dark energy seeping from the Corebot Victor's blackened Core.

Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

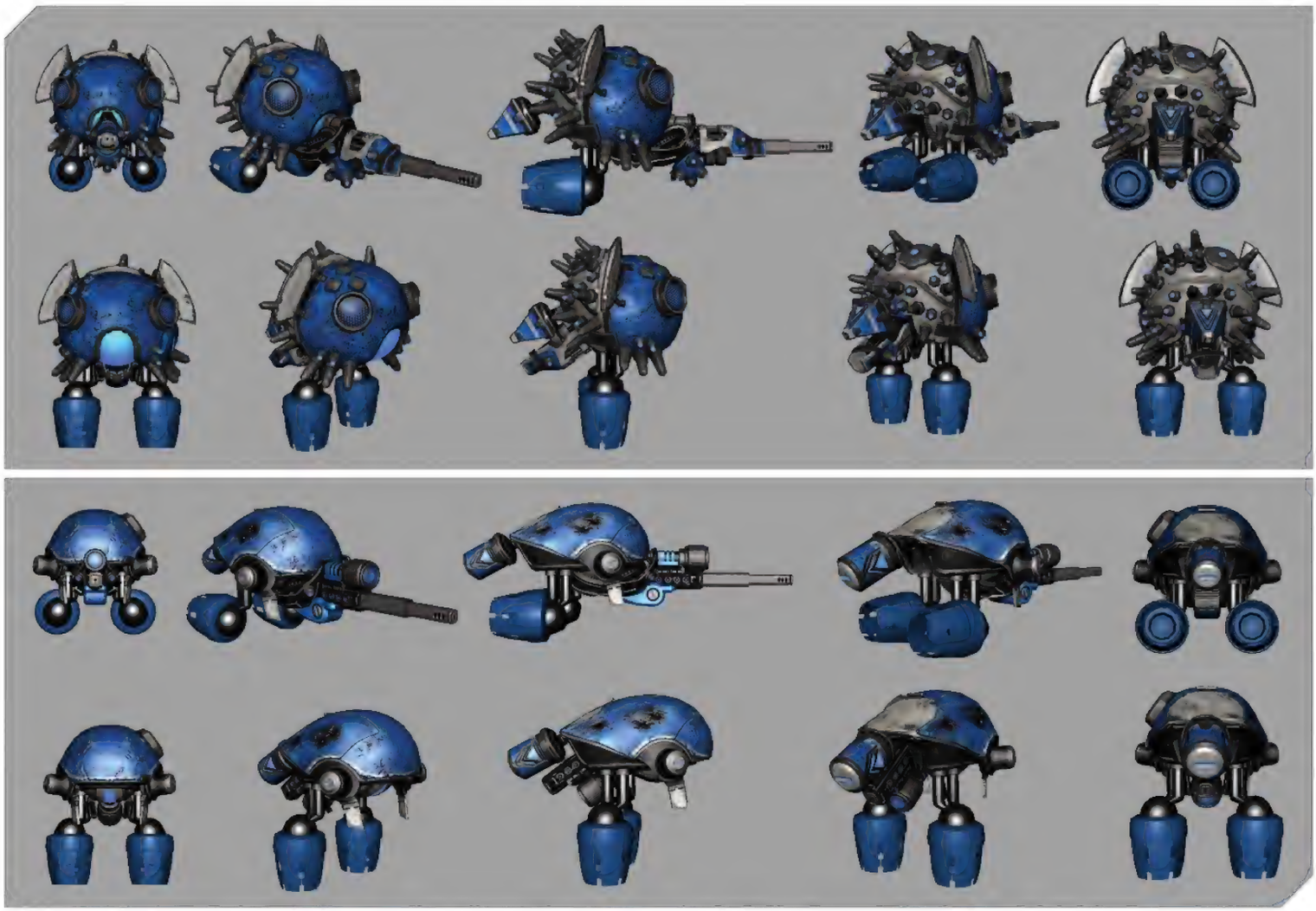
Todd Keller and Dan Doherty



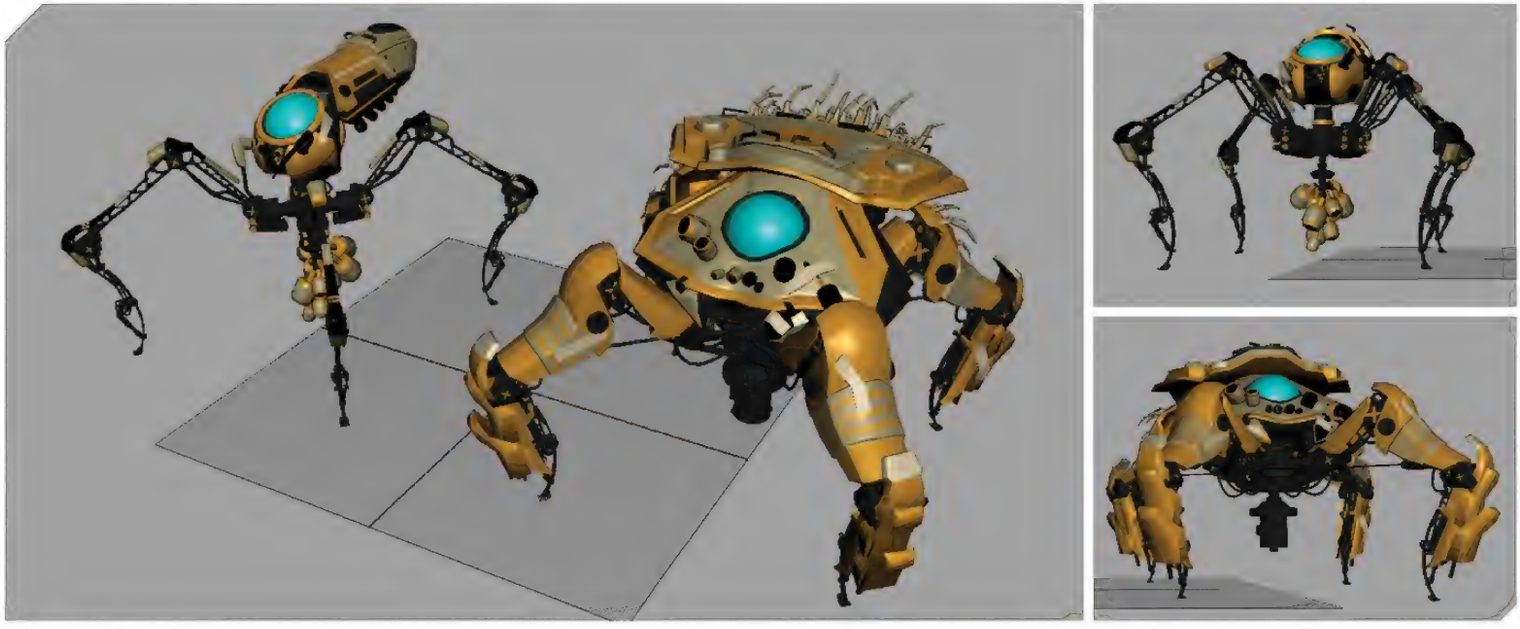


Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

Todd Keller, Dan Doherty, and Emmanuel Lecouturier



Todd Keller and Dan Doherty



Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

The original design for the Flier frame on the facing page had long tentacle arms, but these proved to be problematic during combat. So the team redesigned the Flier as seen at the top of this page and took the opportunity to add endearing, humorous features such as retractable arms and thrusters that doubled as feet. At the bottom of this page are some explorations of Spider frame variants which attempted to find a balance of creepy and cute.

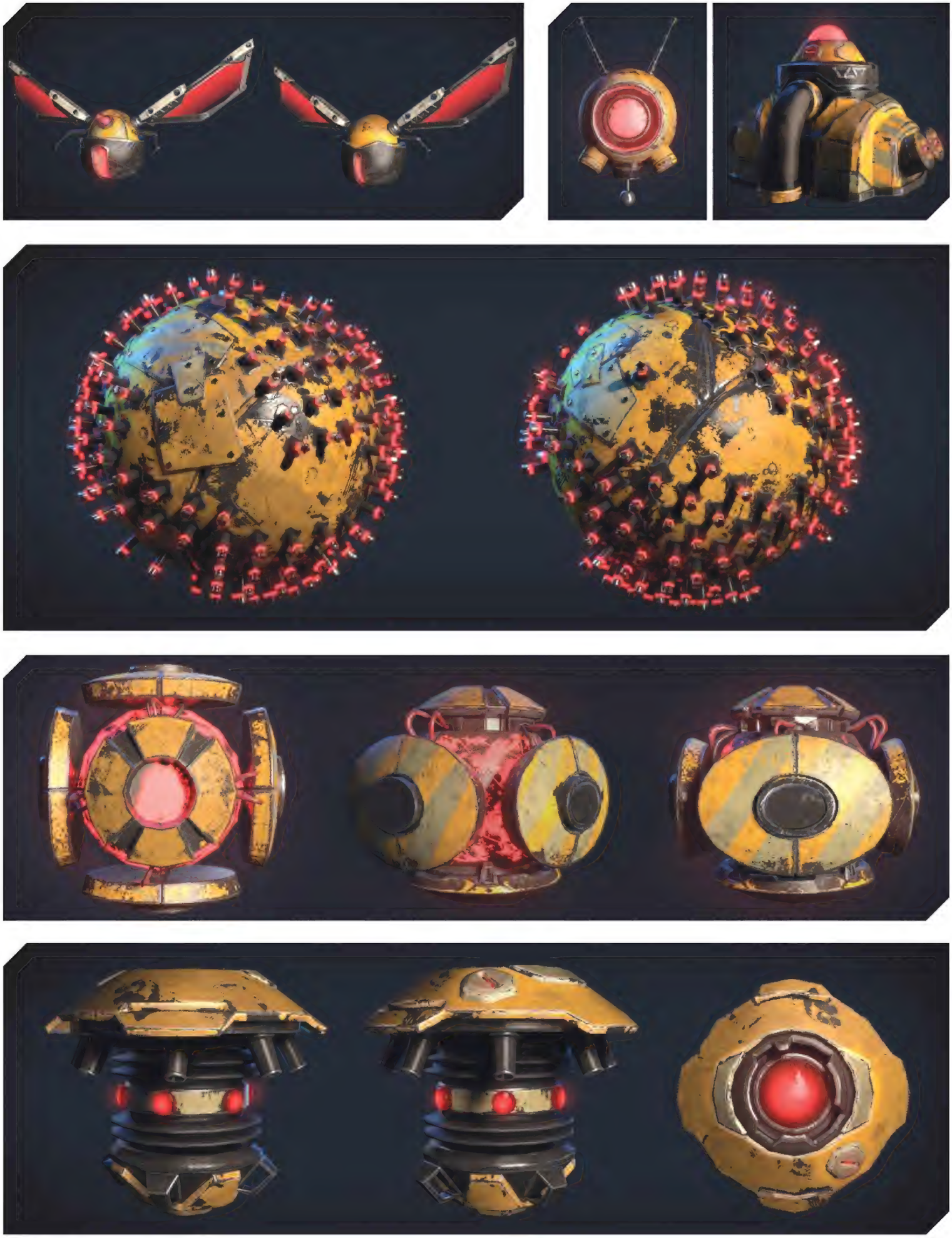
COREBYTES

Corebytes are robots that lack Cores and generally perform simpler support roles on Far Eden. They are more limited in scope than their Corebot counterparts, which allowed the team to build a large and diverse set of Corebyte enemies. Each Corebyte has one "hook," or core behavior. For example, the Shell Turret on the right pops open to fire at the player before closing back into an impervious, armored state. For this reason, the Corebyte design process was a classic case of form following function.

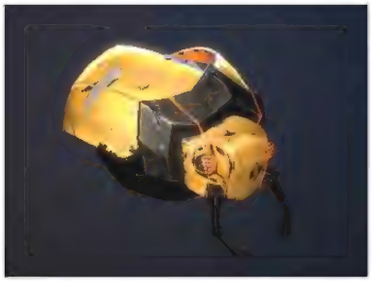
Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

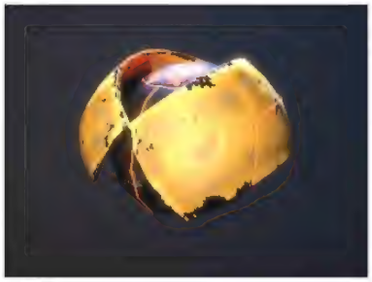
Todd Keller, Dan Doherty, and Marco Puricelli

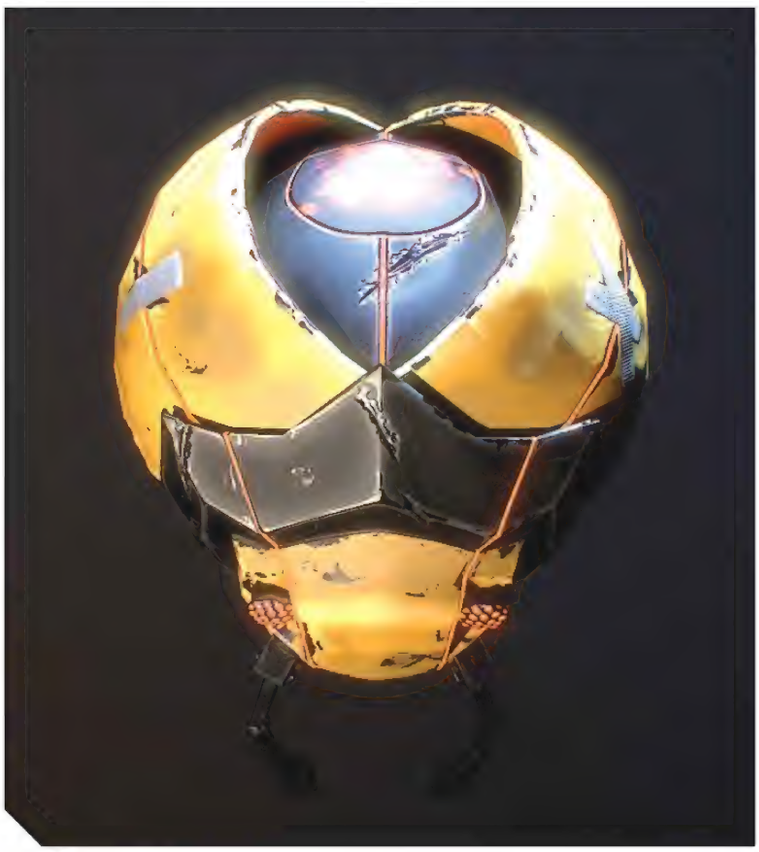
Todd Keller, Dan Doherty, and Loïc Paulus



Todd Keller, Dan Doherty, Loïc Paulus, and Marco Puricelli







Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

Todd Keller and Dan Doherty

CHAPTER 003

ENVIRONMENTS

Thomas Pringle

ENVIRONMENT CONCEPTS

In the early explorations of the story, Joule finds herself in a Corebot city. In keeping with the Corebot character design, we extended a similar palette to the city and brought in large, spherical shapes. We wanted the configurations of the buildings to have the same feeling of density found at a container yard at a port. To protect themselves from Far Eden's brutal sandstorms, the Corebots built their structures close together, as high as possible above the swirling dust and grit on the surface.

Todd Keller and Thomas Pringle

Craig Sellars

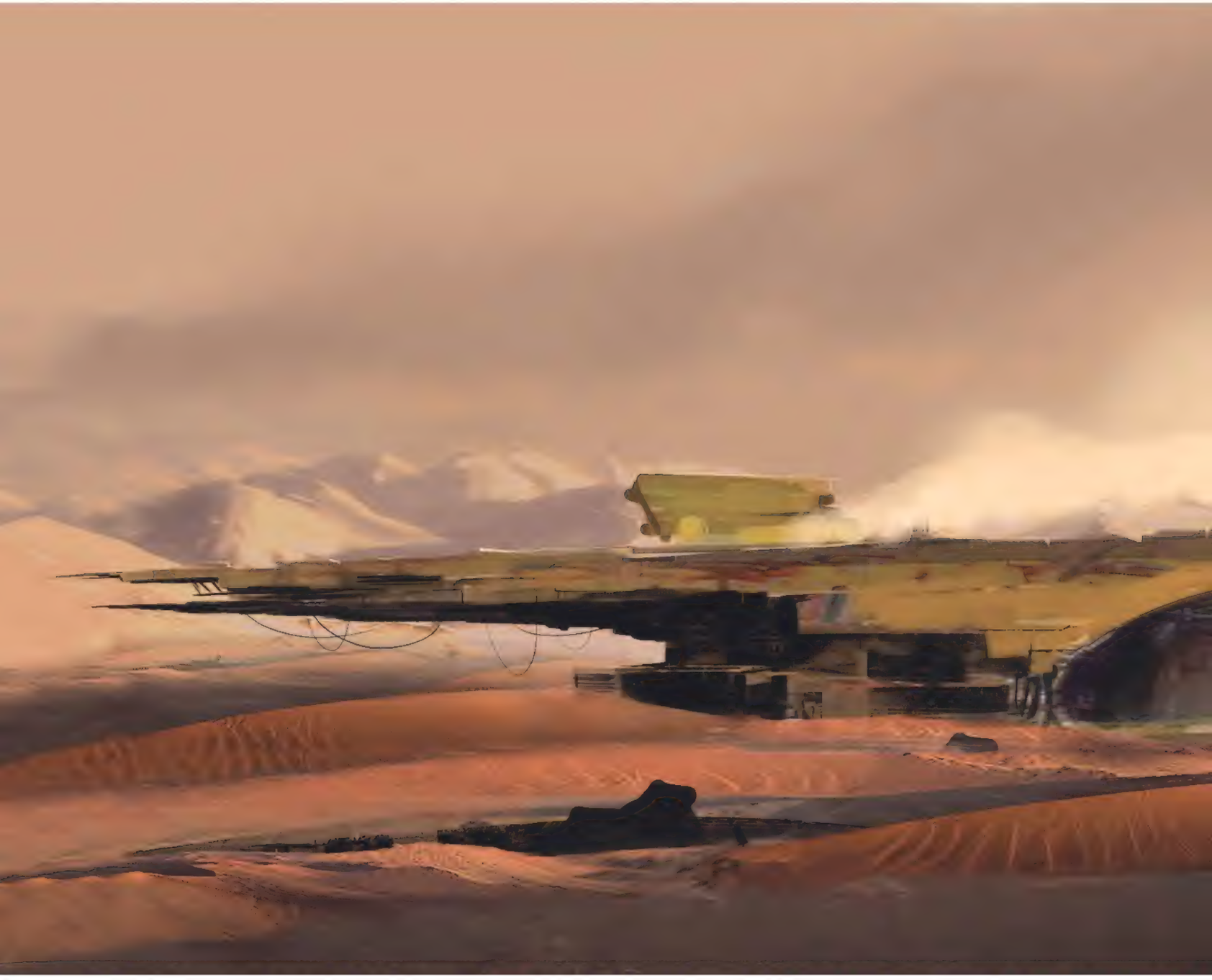
Craig Sellars

An early exploration of the Shifting Sands area of the game, where sandstorms come and go, raising or lowering the height of the terrain, uncovering new dungeons and other opportunities for adventure. The landscape design reinforces Joule's sense of isolation and the foreboding influence of Victor.

Thomas Pringle

Thomas Pringle

The Far Eden mission was meant to terraform the planet over two hundred years. Key to this effort were atmospheric processing machines called Pylons. Here, early versions of these devices are anchored to the ground by massive chains—an element that stayed with the Pylons even after their design evolved into its final pyramidal shape.



Before the team implemented a fast travel system, *ReCore*'s story had Joule's Crawler drive from one area to another. In this image, the Crawler reaches the end of the road, literally, at the edge of the Shifting Sands.

Thomas Pringle

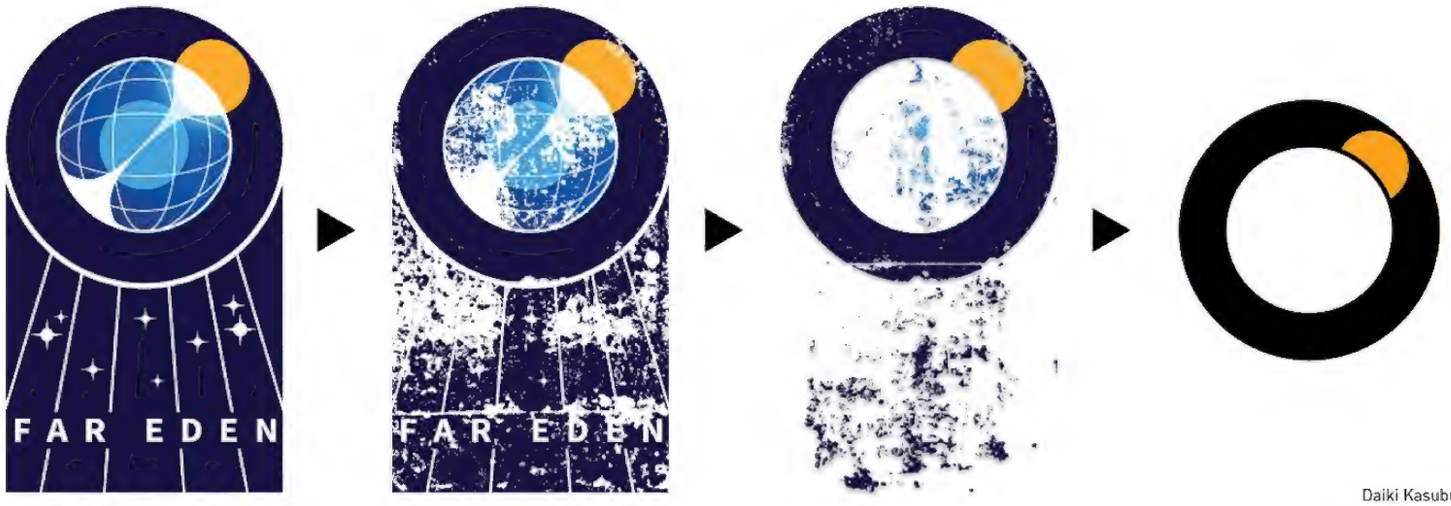
Todd Keller

This depiction of unique Corebot regions for the player to explore pushes the scale with mountain-sized dunes and floating cities intending to show the massive vistas of Far Eden. Here too is a more refined take on the Pylons, still chained to the surface.

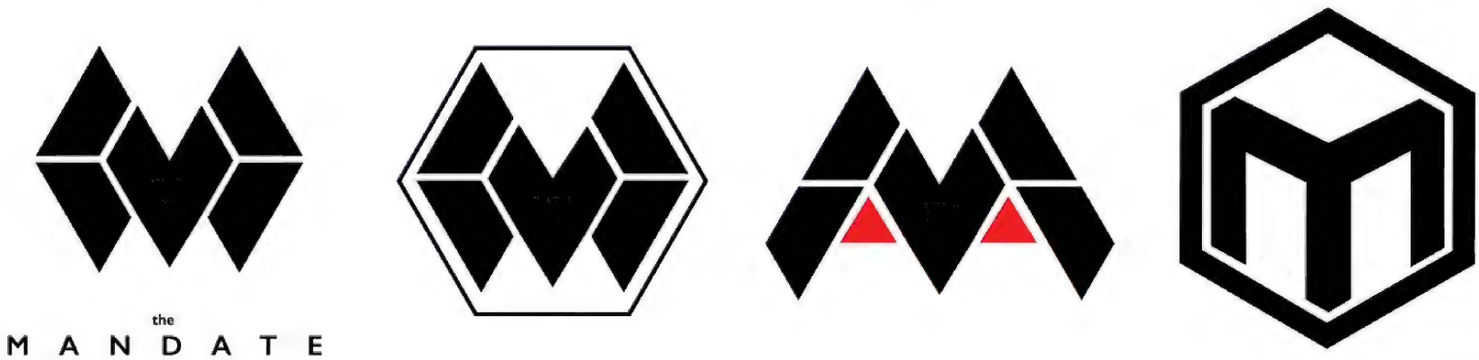
LOGOS AND SIGNS

The fight against Dust Devil and the mission to Far Eden were both efforts overseen by a shadowy organization known as the Mandate. We wanted the Mandate logo to use strong, heavy line work and echo the hexagonal shape we see on many of the robot frames. While the Mandate logo has menace, the Far Eden patch and other imagery are aspirational—much like the mission logos of real-world space agencies.

Patrick Shettlesworth



Daiki Kasubuchi

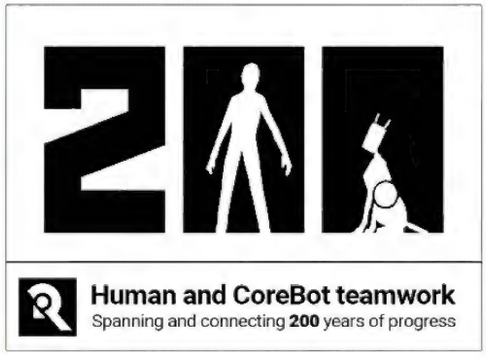


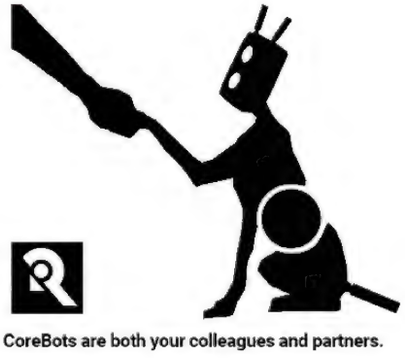
Patrick Shettlesworth

Daiki Kasubuchi

Daiki Kasubuchi

Patrick Shettlesworth





Daiki Kasubuchi

Daiki Kasubuchi

Patrick Shettlesworth

Patrick Shettlesworth

Daiki Kasubuchi

Patrick Shettlesworth

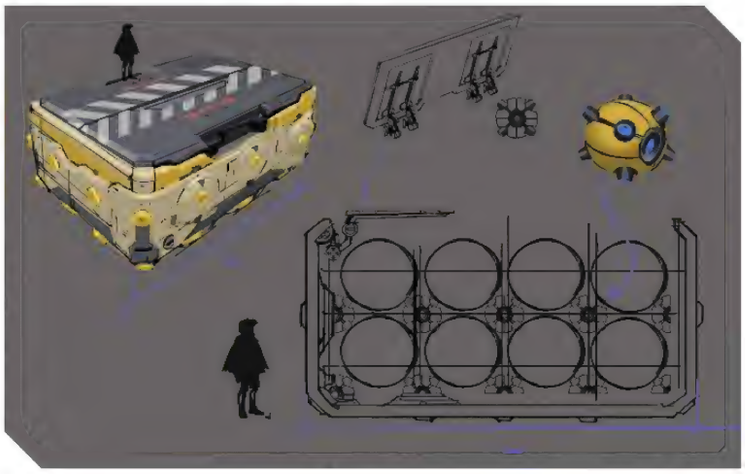
Safety posters in Far Eden facilities were designed for human and Corebot workers. On the facing page are propaganda posters from the Corebot revolutionary war. These images include alphanumeric shapes from the Corebot symbolic language known as "Digimote."

Daiki Kasubuchi

Damien Papet

THE CORE FOUNDRY

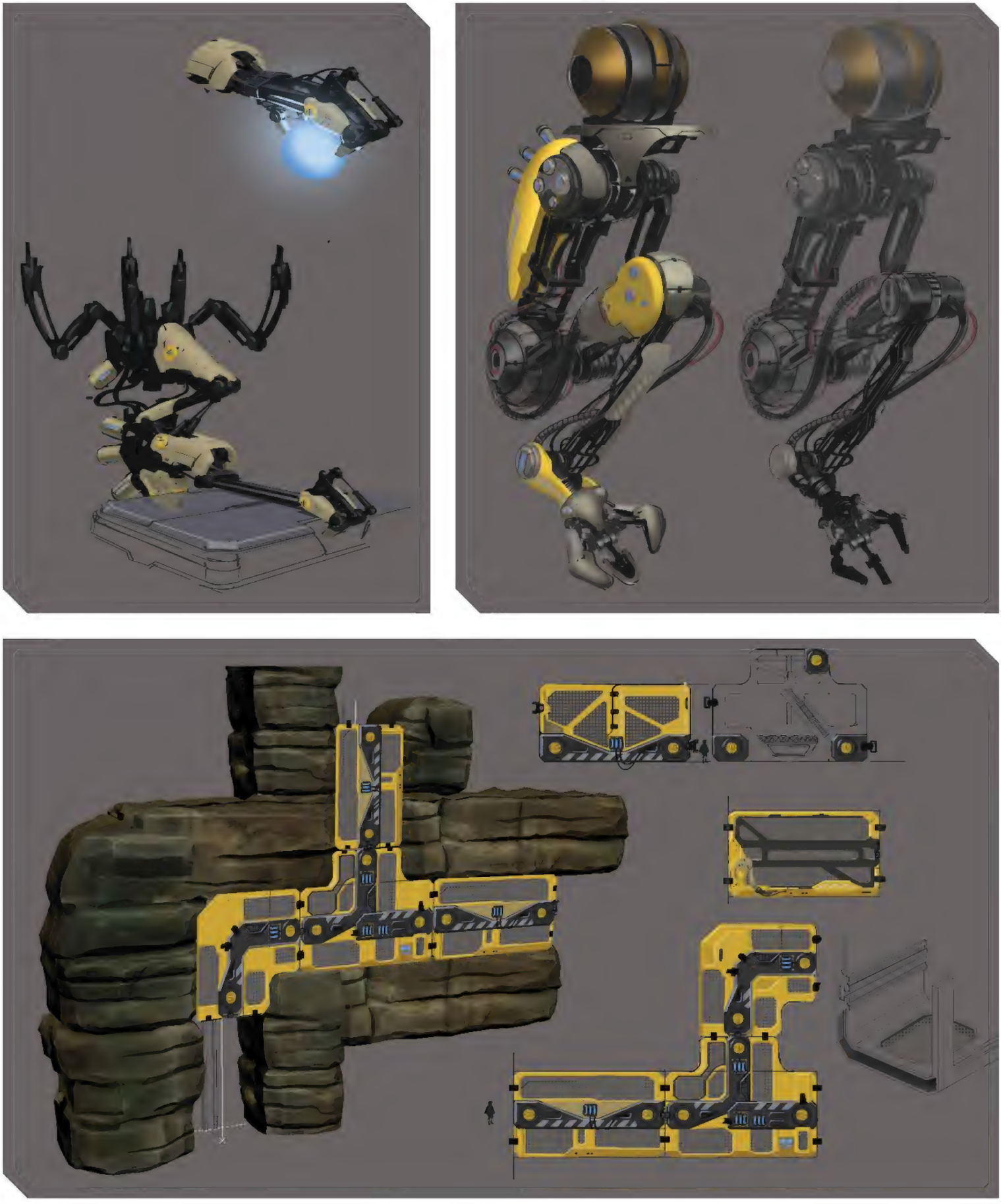
Colored in greens and yellows, the Core Foundry is a giant facility filled with Corebot technology that has been mysteriously abandoned. As the player journeys farther into the depths of the foundry, we wanted it to feel progressively more hostile to humans. Signage would be defaced with Digimote graffiti sympathetic to Victor, the platforming would grow more dangerous, and the machinery would take on aggressive forms.



Antoine Lysson

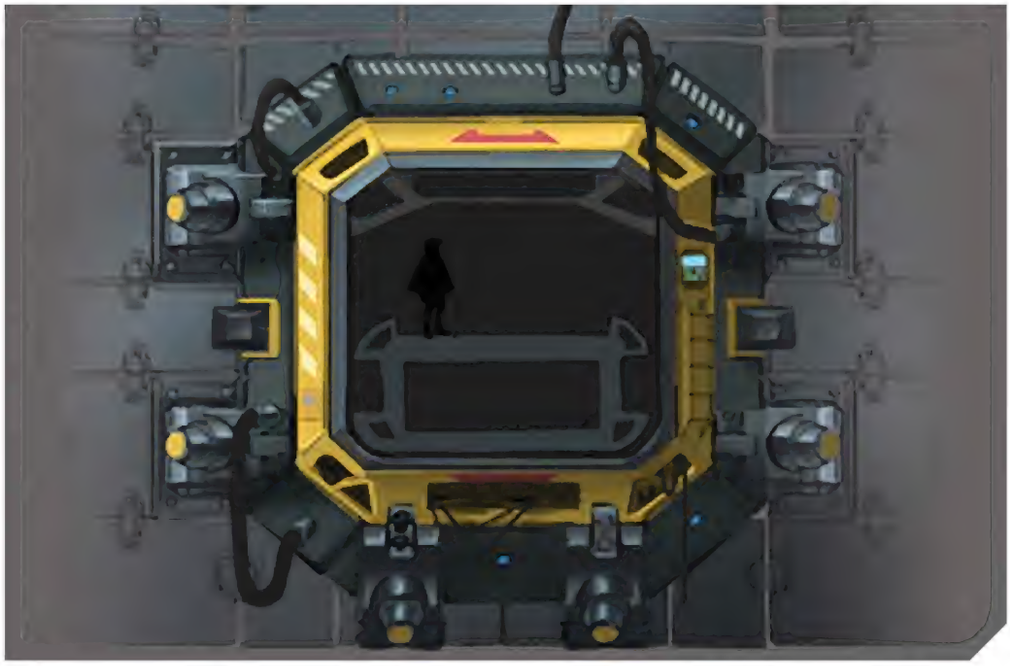
Damien Papet

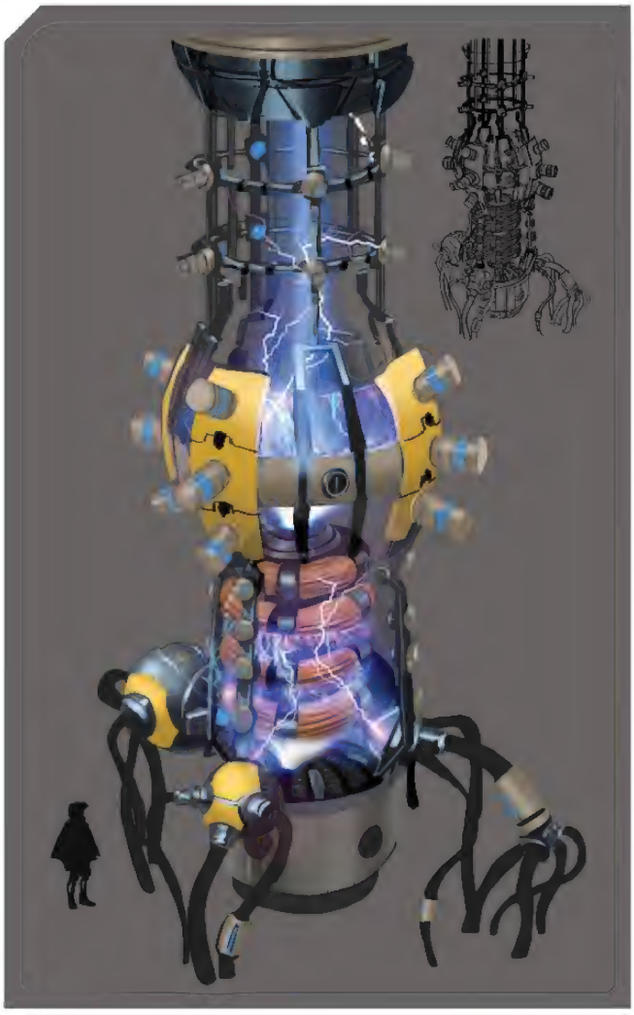
Antoine Lysson



Antoine Lysson

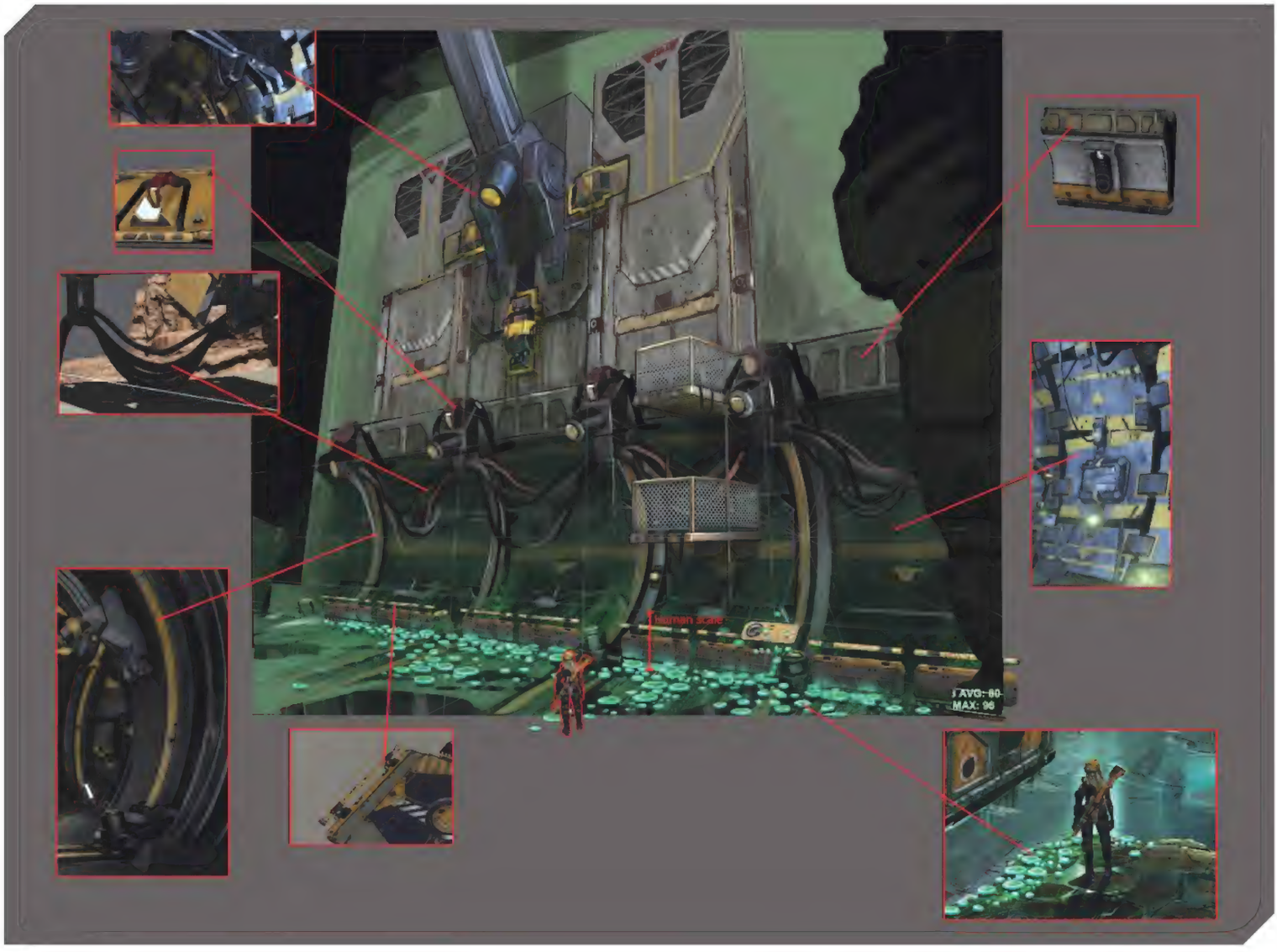
The foundry machinery was designed using the same guidelines as the Corebots—large, yellow, geometric metal shapes over black metal skeletons. These mechanical elements also helped the player find interactive elements, such as the Spider Rails seen above.





The scale of the machinery was used to show how foreign the world of the Corebots was to humans. With this in mind, we needed to make sure there were enough human-sized elements on the machines to make them seem large, rather than making Joule seem small.

Antoine Lysson



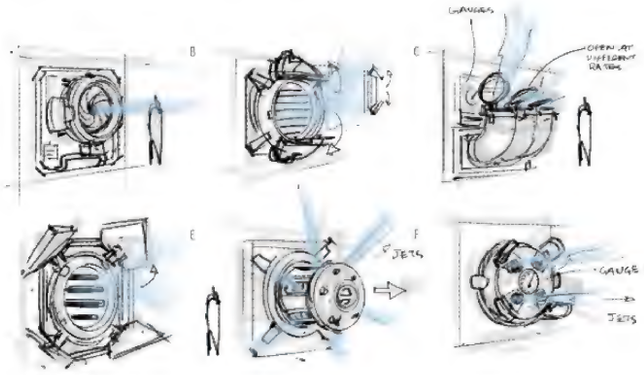
Damien Papet

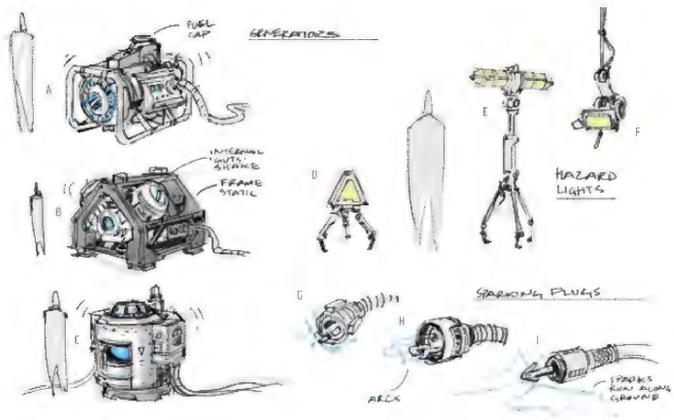
On the facing page is a Core Incubator, where the AI personalities are baked into the Cores. Above are explorations of the control consoles that Joule uses to interact with vital foundry machinery.

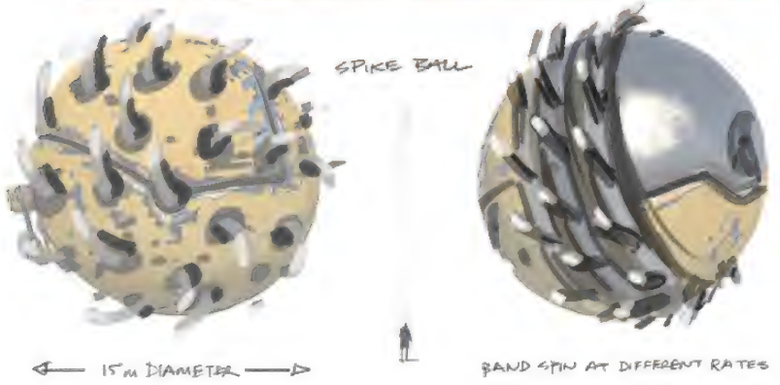
Damien Papet

THE QUARRY

An excavation pit dominates one of the game's explorable areas. Here a hulking drill mines the rare crystalline materials essential to the Core manufacturing process.







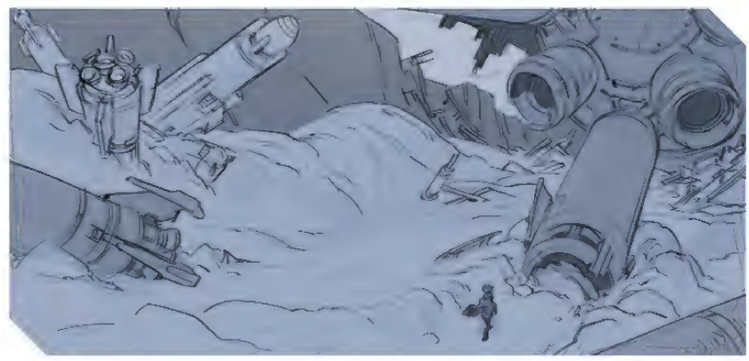
Ryan Denning

Alexis Boyer, Chris Percle, Elizabeth Foster, Kip Carbone, Markel Milanes, Patrick Sullivan, and Todd Keller

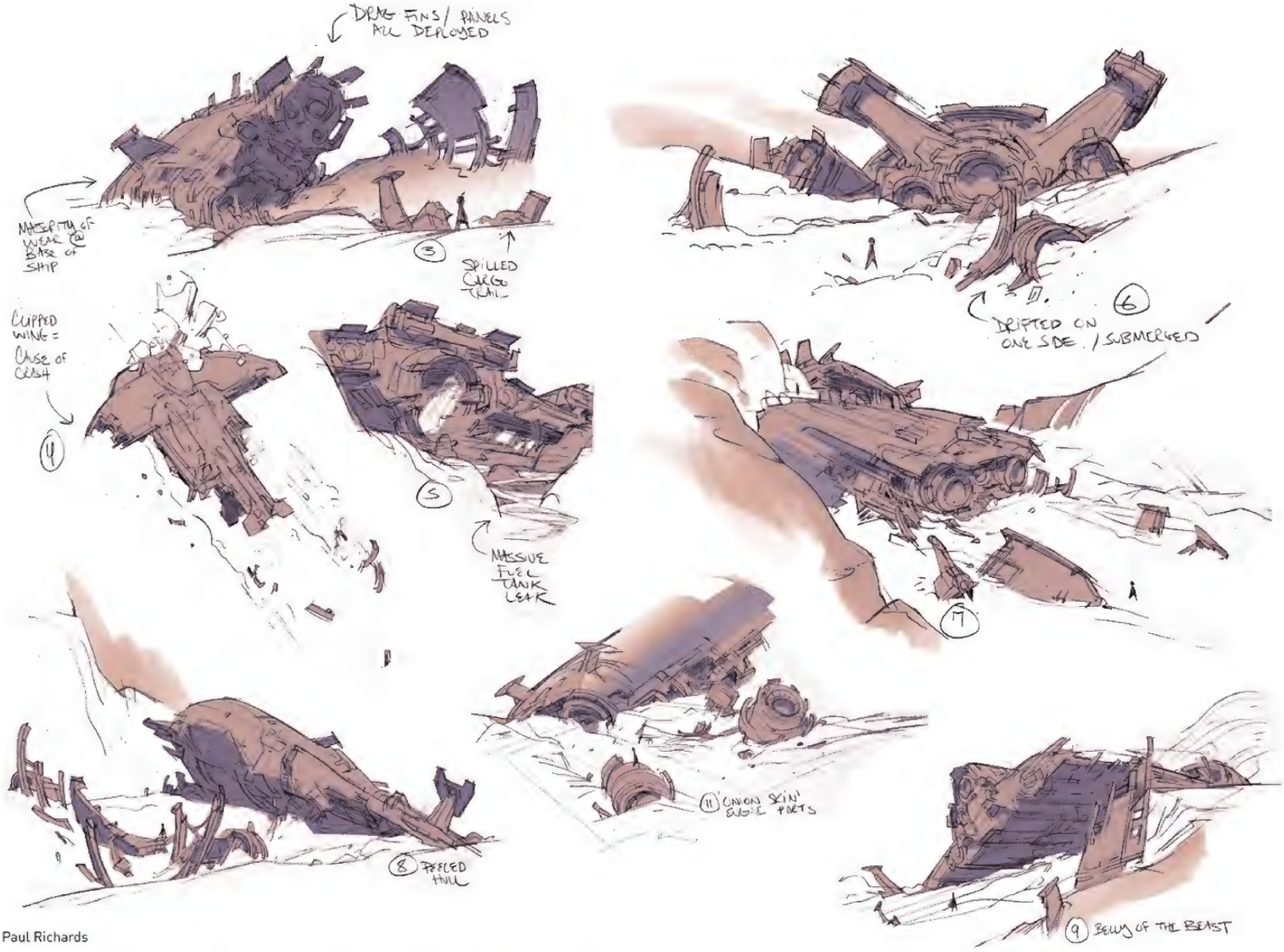
Ryan Denning

THE CRASH SITE

Here we give the player a glimpse of the tragic end of one of the human evacuation ships after an attack by Victor. The scale of this vessel, like other key landmarks in *ReCore*, is huge.

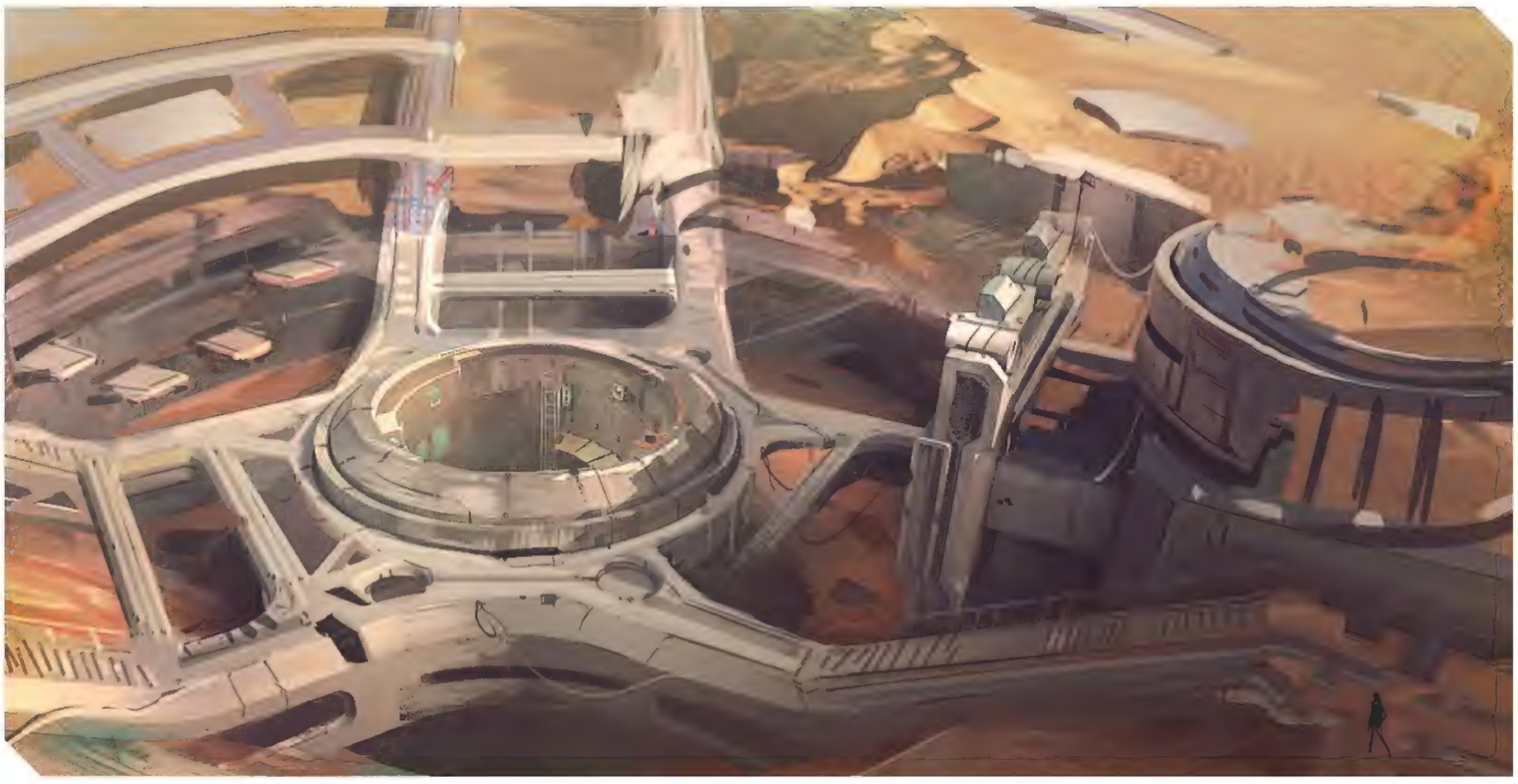


Paul Richards



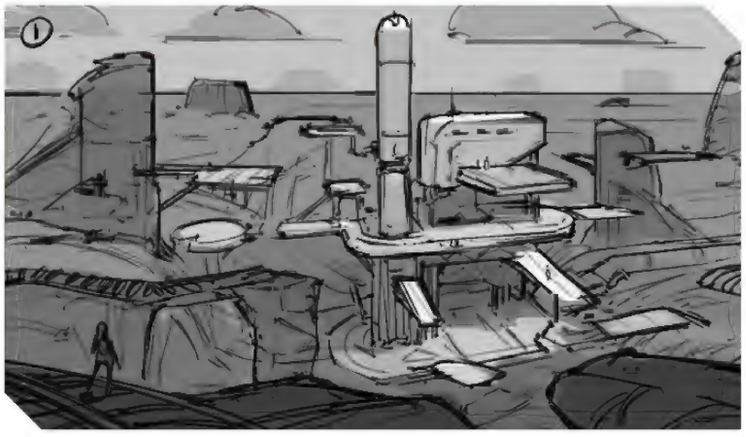
Paul Richards

Alexis Boyer, Chris Percle, Elizabeth Foster, Kip Carbone, Markel Milanes, Patrick Sullivan, and Todd Keller



LAUNCH AREA

Centuries of sandstorms have taken their toll on this launch silo for a rocket designed to ferry passengers and equipment from the surface to orbit. We wanted the facility to feel as though it was going to see heavy use by the colonists on Far Eden. There's a slickness to the design that isn't found in structures meant for the Corebots.



Marcel van Vuuren of Atomhawk

Alexis Boyer, Chris Percle, Elizabeth Foster, Kip Carbone, Markel Milanes, Patrick Sullivan, and Todd Keller

Marcel van Vuuren of Atomhawk

During production, the environment team generally used concepts that were more line-driven. To enhance the mood of an area, the concept artists would create a more polished painting.

Marcel van Vuuren of Atomhawk

Damien Papet

THE WARREN

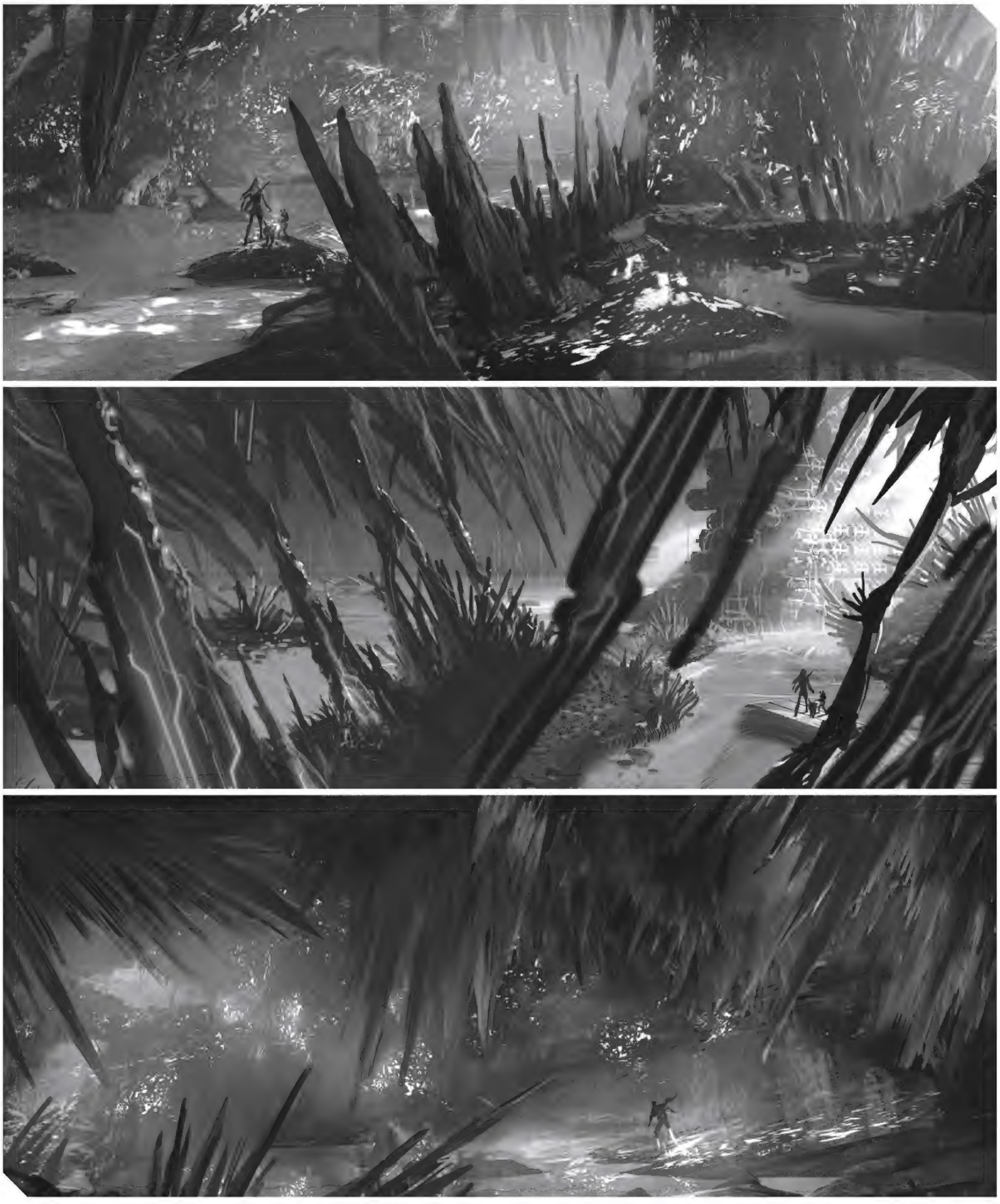
These caverns mark the boundary of Victor's domain and echo his corrupting influence on the Corebots. Just as Victor upsets the plans for the Far Eden colony, so too are the objects in these caves chaotic and set at awkward angles. Victor's influence has even polluted the "E-Turner," or Corebot fuel that flows through the caverns. This toxic fluid was meant to create an environmental hazard for the player. But its initial red color felt too much like lava and was eventually changed to green.

Damien Papet

Damien Papet

In this early image, Joule emerges from the corrupted caverns to see Far Eden Tower, Victor's fortress and the heart of the terraforming system.

Thomas Pringle

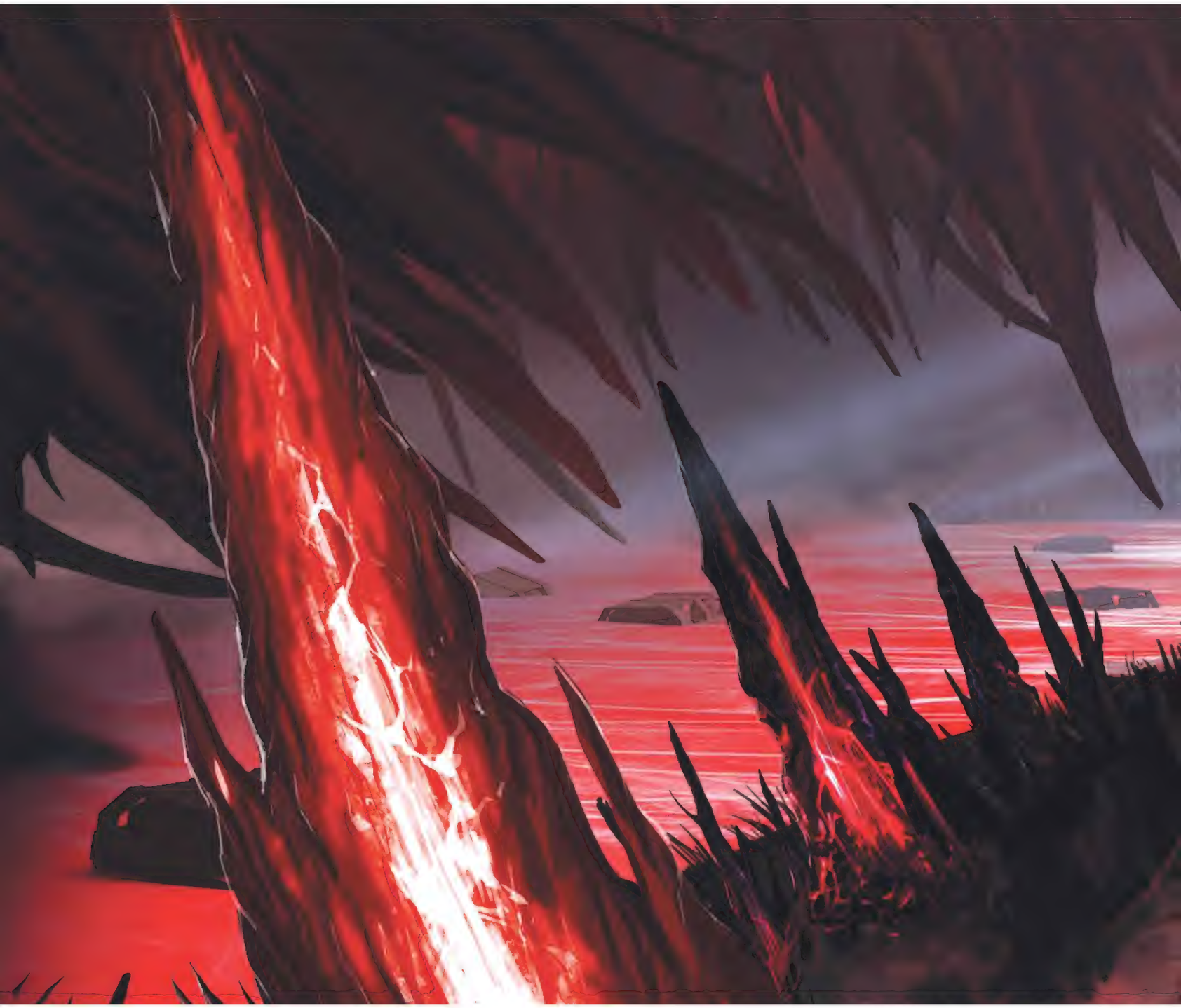


Todd Keller, Craig Sellars, and Patrice Bourroncle

In some explorations, the caves only featured the corrupt elements. This was unworkable, as without any contrasting elements players would have a much harder time navigating through the space.

Todd Keller, Craig Sellars, and Patrice Bourroncle

Another consideration was how close the player could get to these corruption spikes; in some cases, the player could reach areas they were never intended to access, breaking game play.



We also wanted to explore elements that pushed us away from a primarily rocky look for the corrupted caverns. Here a river of polluted E-Turner suggested a wetness that helped drive the in-game materials in a direction different from other game areas.

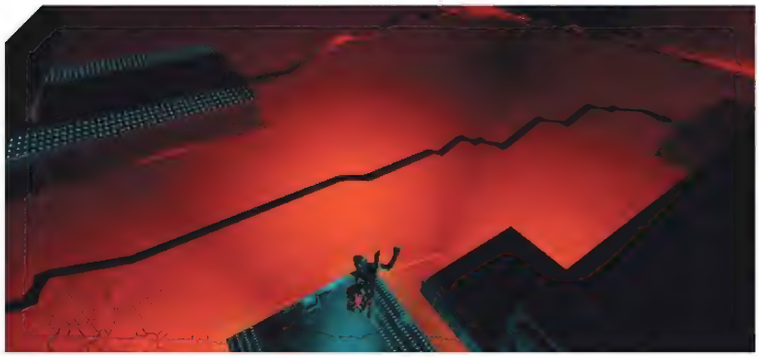
Damien Papet

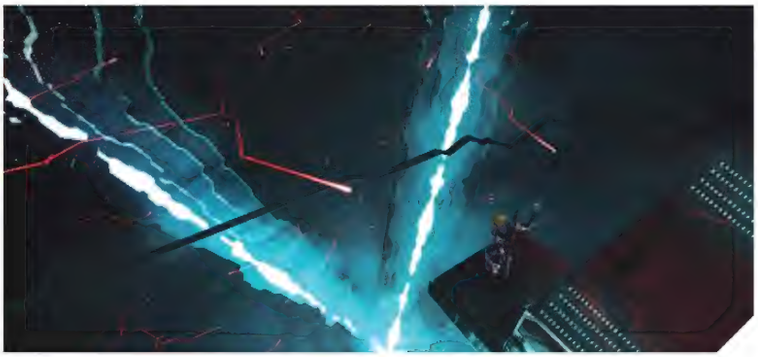
Damien Papet

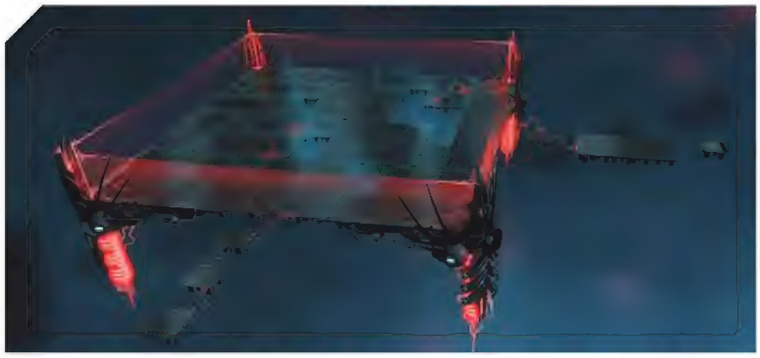
Inside Far Eden Tower, above, Joule finally sees the extent of Victor's corruption. On the facing page, the security systems of the tower now answer to Victor and actively try to keep Joule from reaching the upper floors with laser barriers, movable platforms, and other hazards.

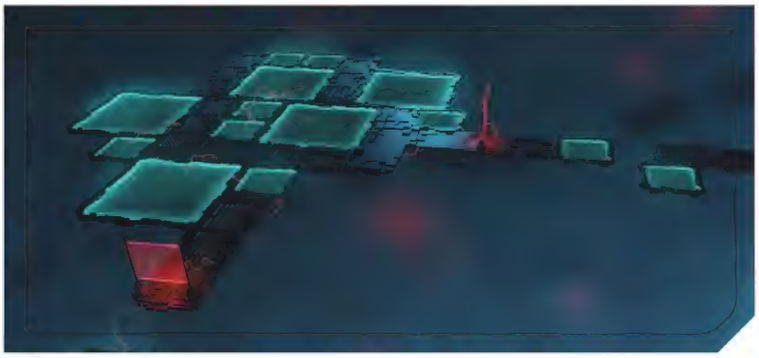
E-TOWER

Nothing on Far Eden matches the power and technology of the E-Tower. We wanted the interior to feel very foreign to what Joule has encountered so far. However, even in the E-Tower, evidence of Victor's corruption is visible.









Todd Keller, Elizabeth Foster, and Damien Papet

Damien Papet

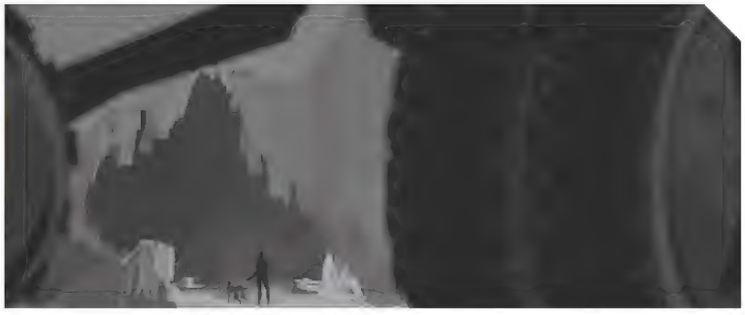
CHAPTER 004

STORYBOARDS

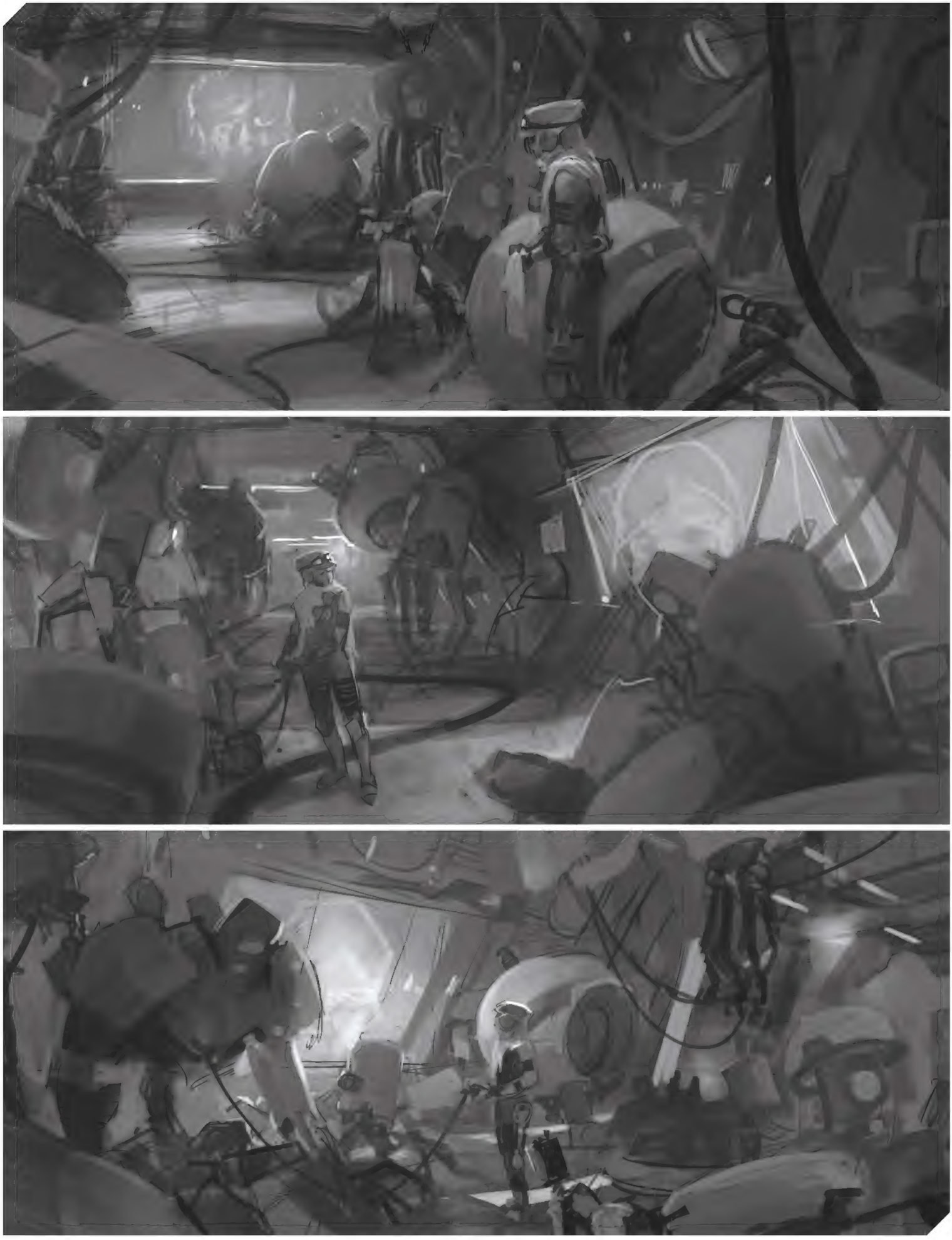
Thomas Pringle

NARRATIVE BEATS

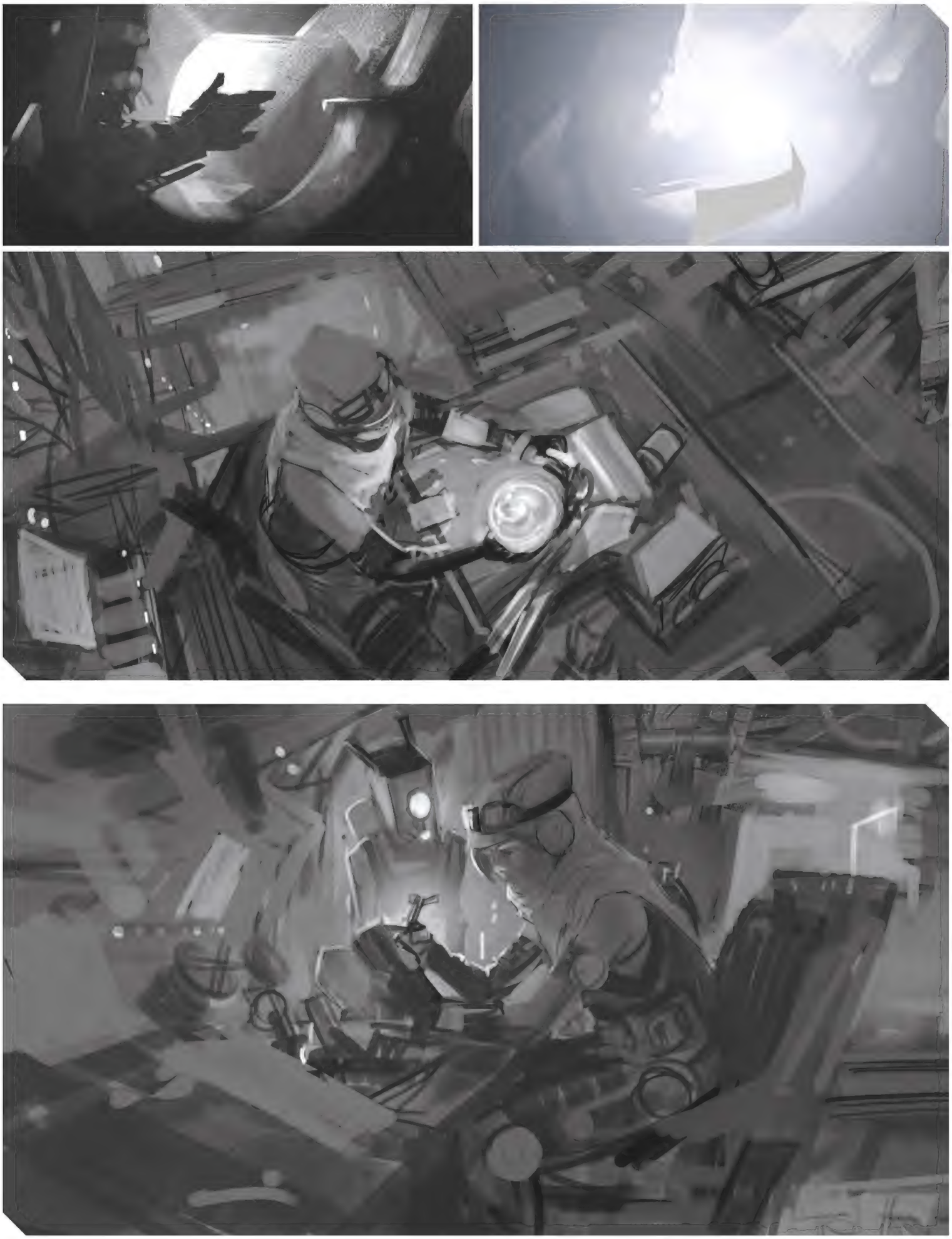
Storyboards from a proof-of-concept animatic show Joule and two of her Corebots, Mack and Seth, barely reaching her Crawler before it is engulfed by a violent sandstorm. Inside, she repairs an abandoned AP-3 frame. Parts of this early concept film evolved into a cinematic toward the end of the game where Joule discovers the last of three primary Cores, the red Core named Duncan.



Craig Sellars and Hovic Alahaidoyan



Craig Sellars and Hovic Alahaidoyan

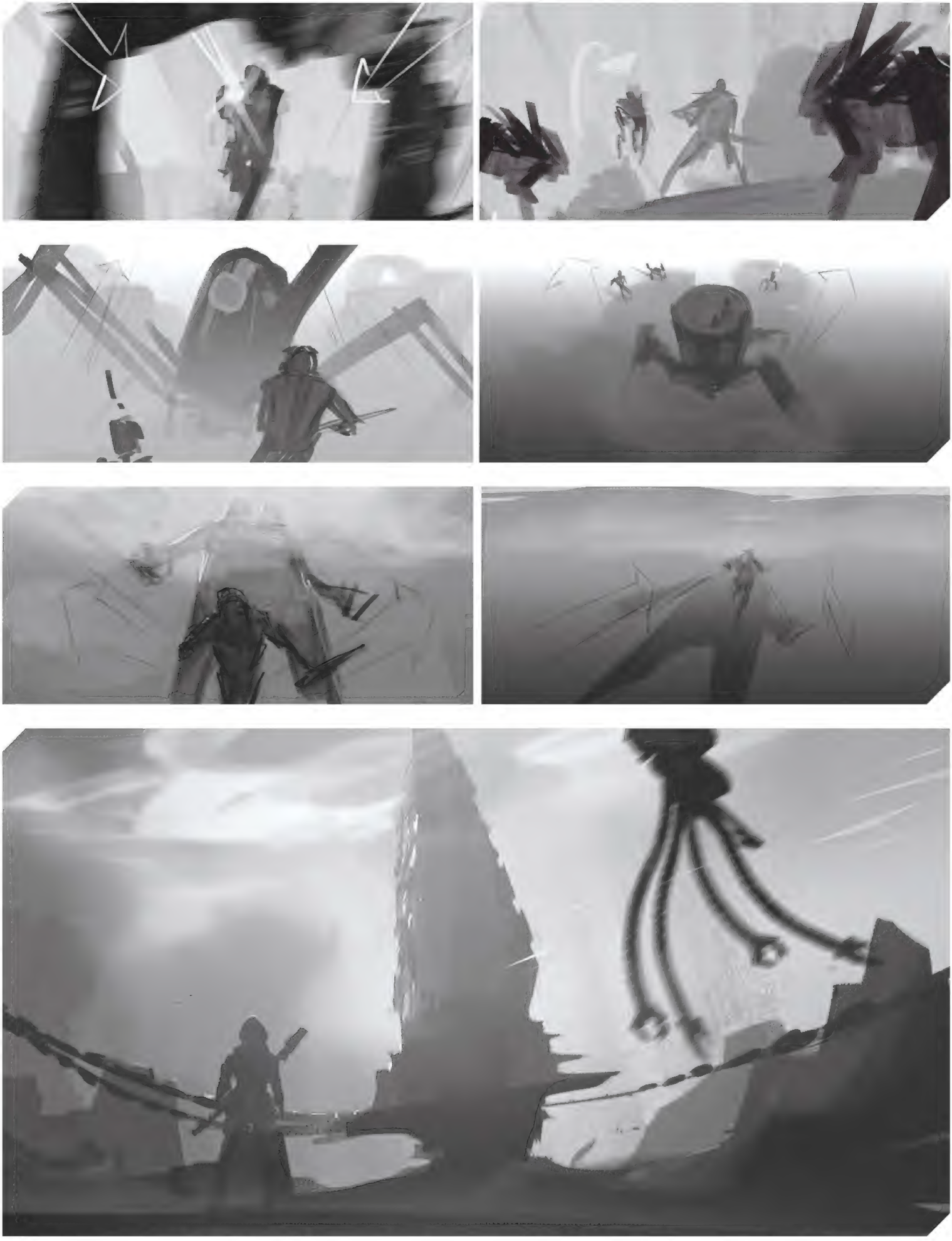


Craig Sellars and Hovic Alahaidoyan

Mood boards like this one helped the team rally around the emotion of the story as well as the artistic style used to portray it.

Craig Sellars

Hovic Alahaidoyan

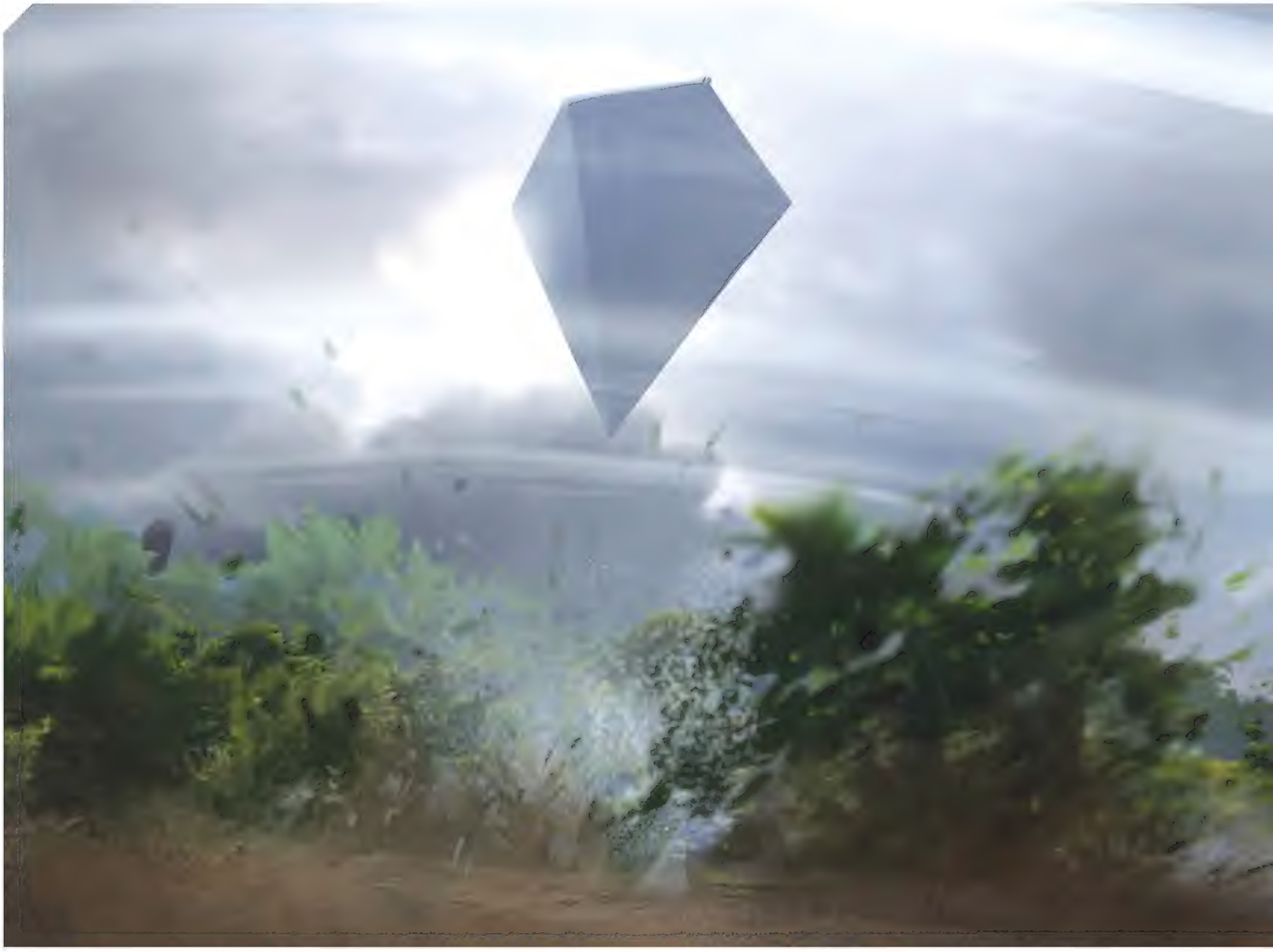


Hovic Alahaidoyan

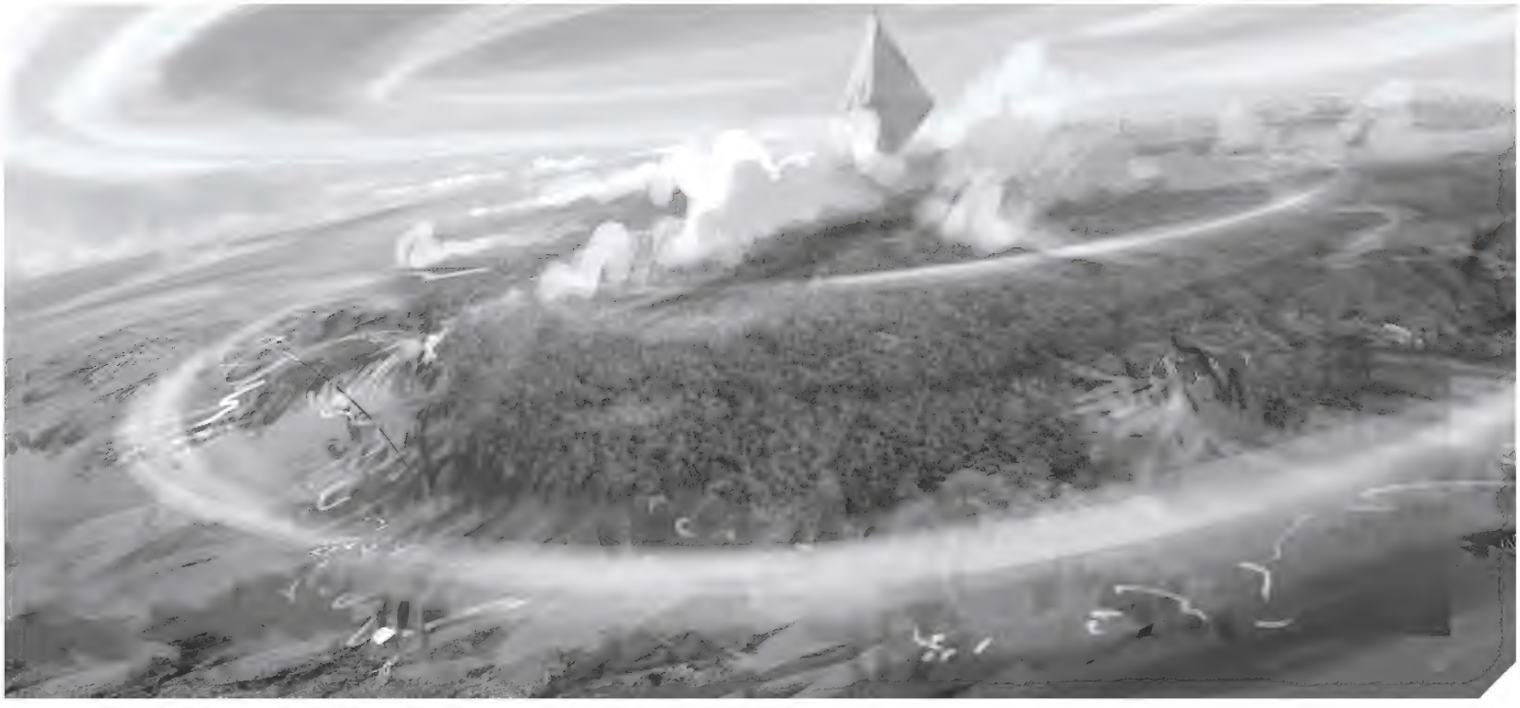
In a scene that proved too ambitious for the game, Joule leads an army of frames similar to Violet in a direct assault on Victor's fortress.

Craig Sellars

Craig Sellars

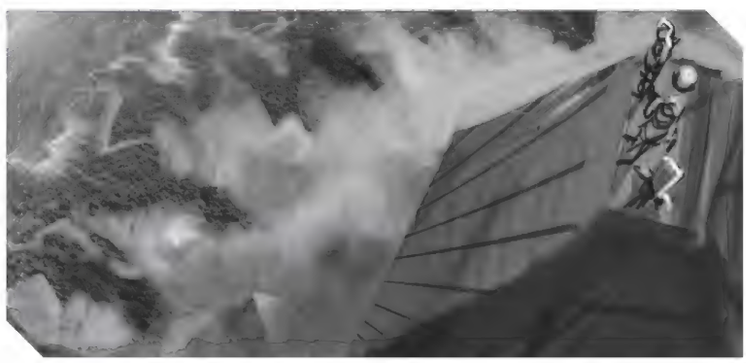


Craig Sellars

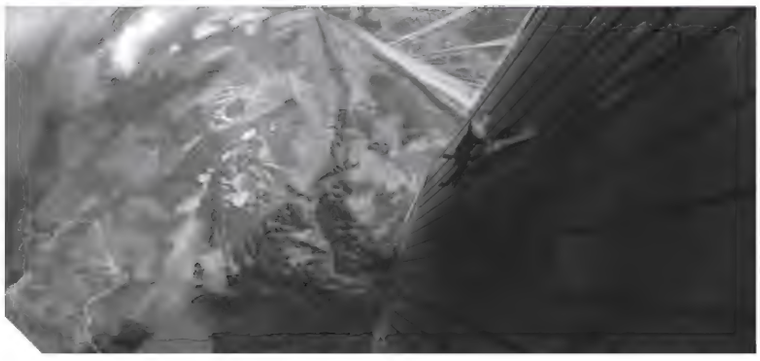


Hovic Alahaidoyan

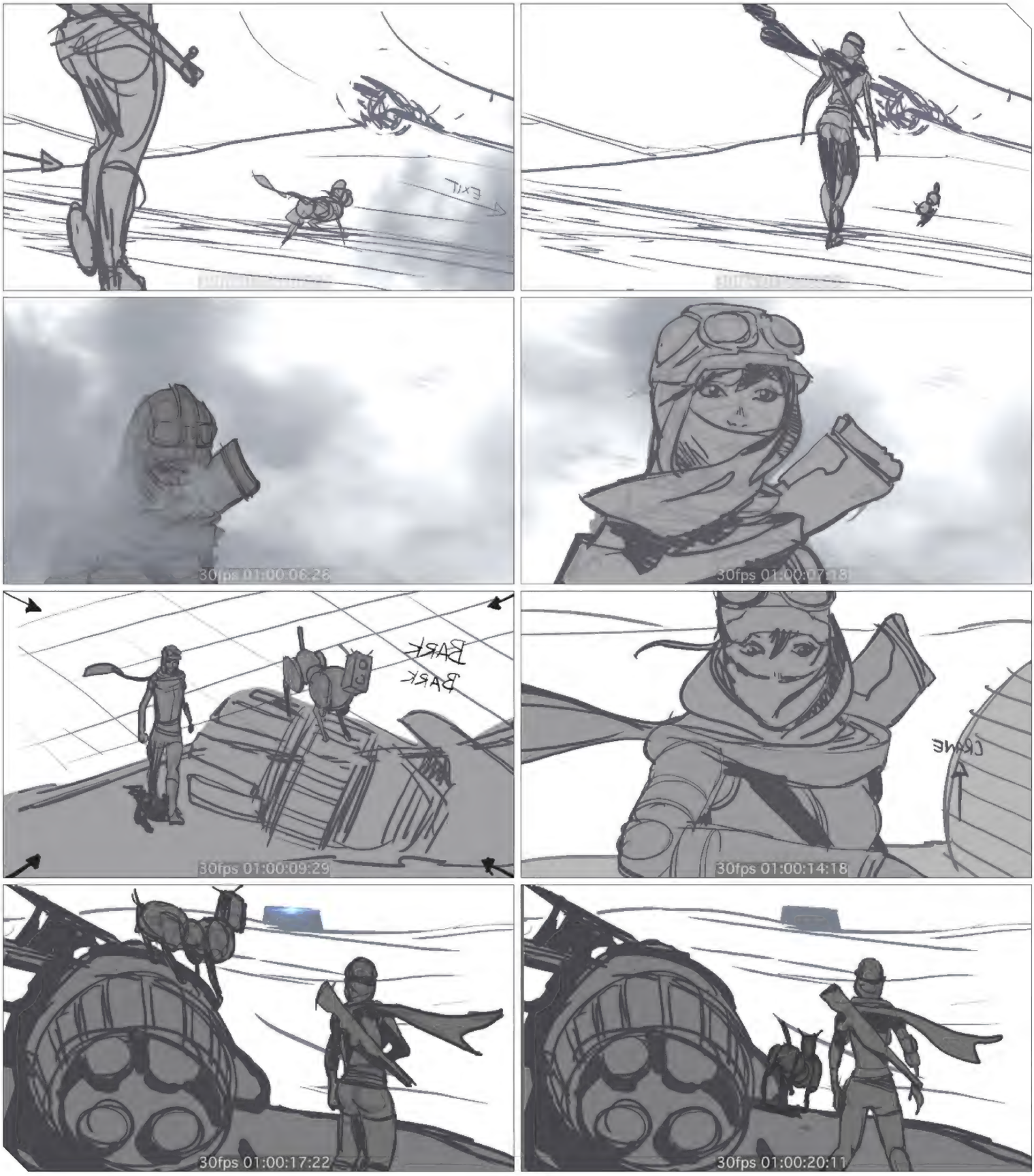
Another mood board captures Joule and Kai triumphantly standing atop Eden Tower and watching the terraforming system spring back to life.



Craig Sellars

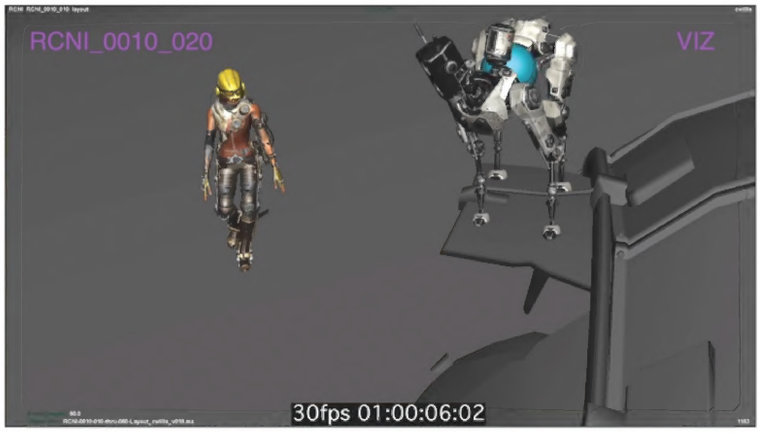


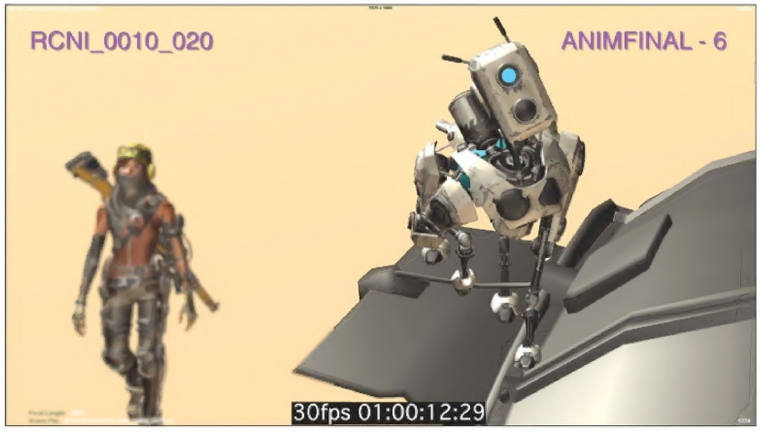
Craig Sellars

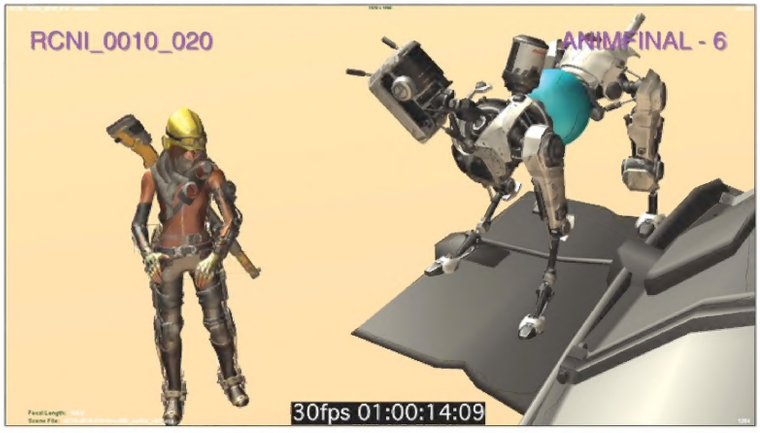


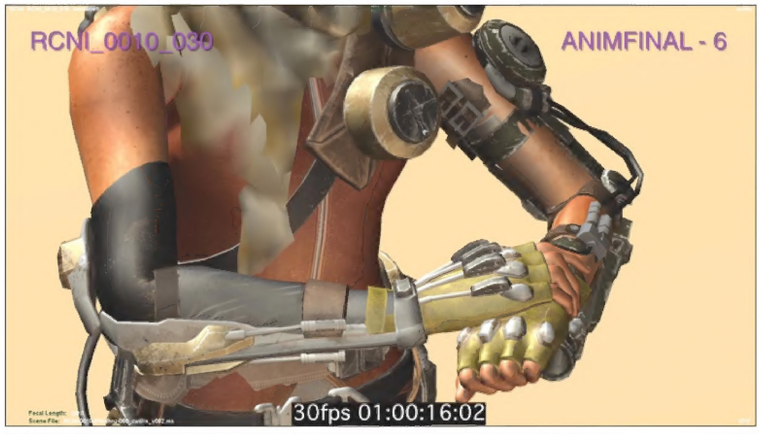
Chad Smith

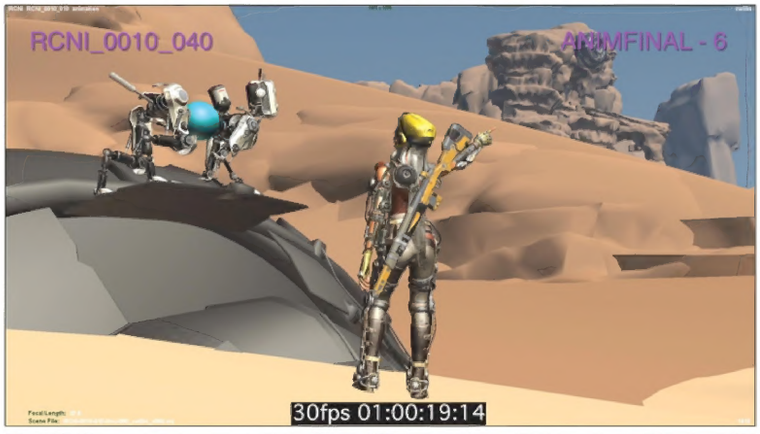
Production storyboards and renders for the game's opening cinematic. These shots introduce Joule and Mack, on the hunt for a mysterious power source.











Curtis Willis

Thank you to the contributing artists,
without whom this book wouldn't have been possible:

Armature

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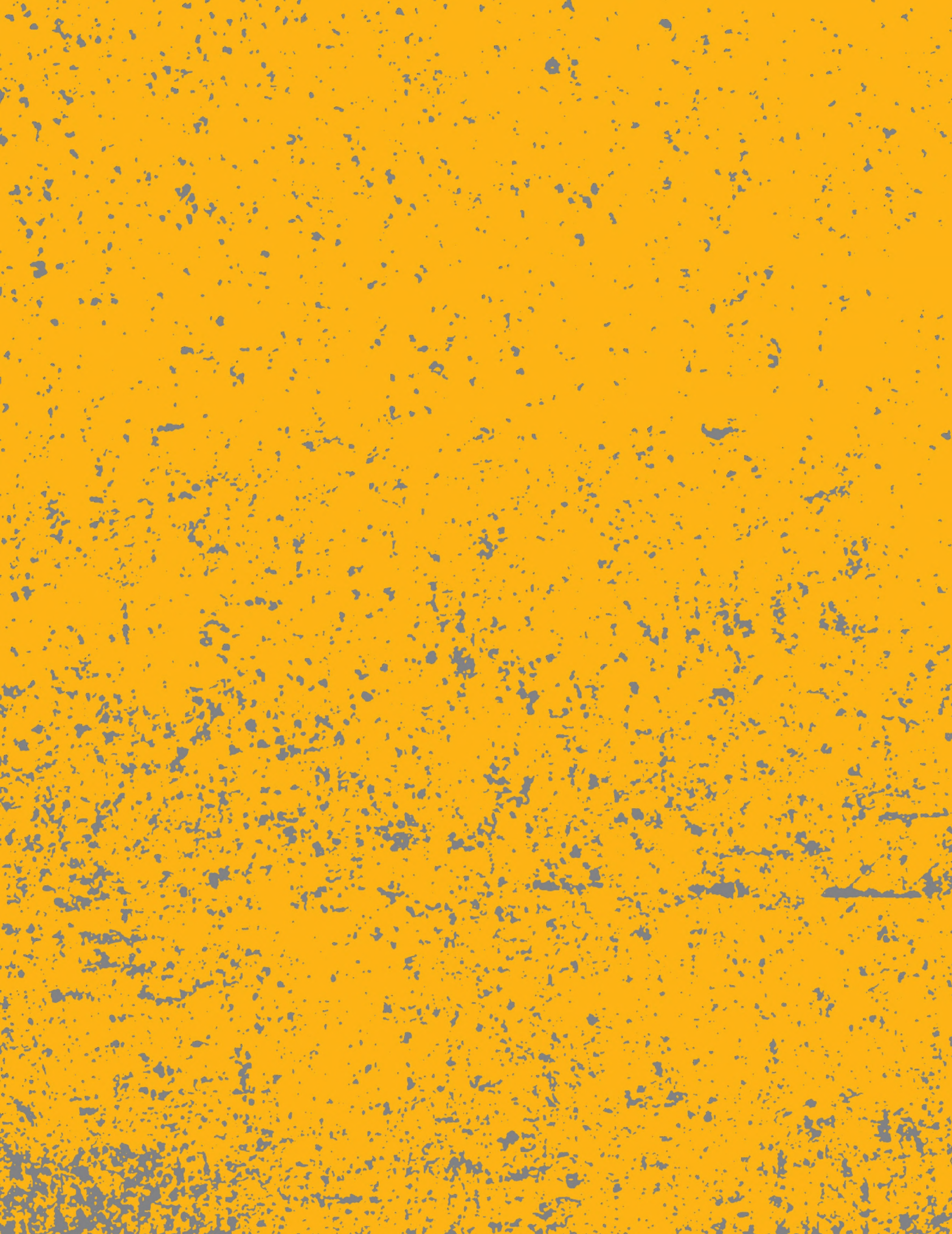
A very special thanks to our families for helping us bring this game to life.



EXPLORE THE WORLD OF

reCore™

On the distant planet Far Eden, humanity's fate rests in the hands of one brave survivor, Joule Adams, and her courageous group of robotic Corebot companions, each with its own unique abilities and powers.

Dark Horse Books is pleased to present this comprehensive volume, examining the art and inspiration behind this epic adventure through a mysterious, dynamic world with *The Art of ReCore*!

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